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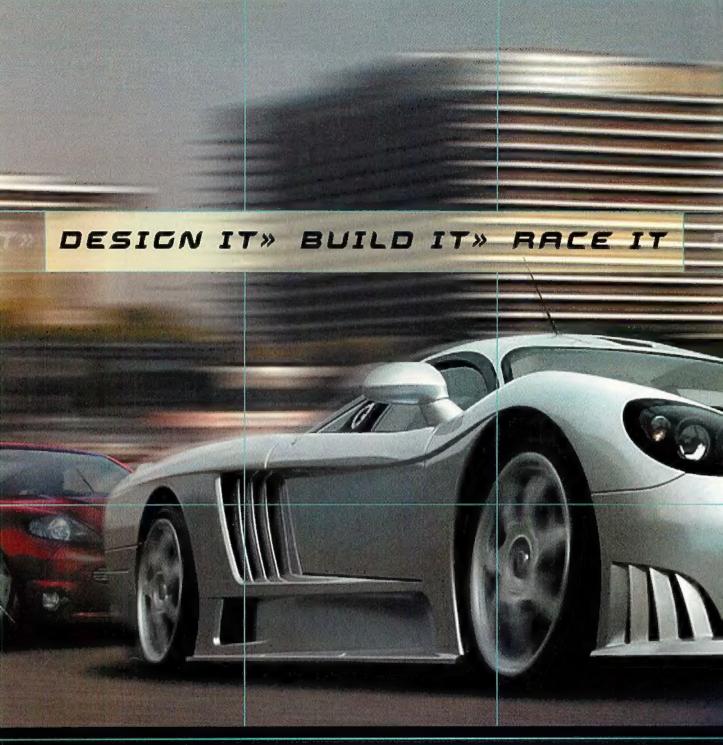
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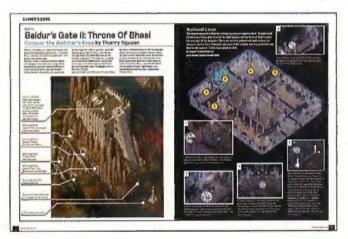
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# GAMING

CONTENTS November/2001



Cover illustration by Bill Petras



## GAMER'S EDGE .....

A massive newbie guide to ANARCHY ONLINE (complete with maps), Easter eggs and cheats for MAX PAYNE, maps of the hardest dungeon in the BG2 expansion, new Runes for DIABLO II expansion,

MECHCOMMANDER 2 strategies, and several new Dirty Tricks leven some for BEJEWELED! |.

## READ.ME .....34

Get your fresh-baked updates on DOOM 3, COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO, and RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN; plus a hands-on preview of MAJESTIC, the demise of Dynamix, and our regular cast of Pipeline, Top 20, 5/10/15, and Reality Check.

## **PREVIEWS**

## Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon

We give you the lowdown on the real-world military hardware and characters you'll use in this squad-based infantry game from the makers of ROGUE SPEAR, Page 52



## MechWarrior IV: Black Knight

New mechs, new maps, new missions. What else can you ask for from an expansion to everyone's favorite BattleTech brawler? Page 56

## Zoo Tycoon

Enjoy all the cuddly perks of running your own zoo, without having to clean up all that elephant doody. Page 58

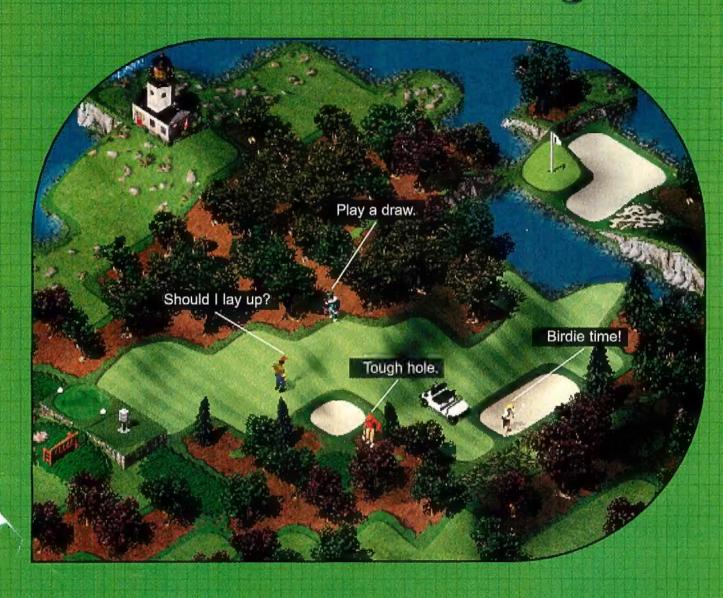
## Monopoly Tycoon

We knew real estate investment could be cutthroat, but we had no idea it could be so much fun. Page 59

re-con (n): the sole unit an infantry battalion relies on for intelligence operations. Arguably the most specialized and highly trained troop formation of any regiment.

If you meet them in combat...

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HARDWARE Samsung sent us a killer 21-inch LCD monitor worth \$4,000. Think they'll get it back? Read the review and take a guess. Also, the return of Microsoft's venerable SideWinder GamePad and the nation's new favorite column: Wil Power. REVIEWS: Samsung SyncMaster 210T, Microsoft SideWinder GamePad, HP Pavilion 9800, Dell Inspiron 8100  Inside Gaming Inside Gami
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HARDWARE Samsung sent us a killer 21-inch LCD monitor worth \$4,000. Think they'll get it back? Read the review and take a guess. Also, the return of Microsoft's venerable SideWinder GamePad and the nation's new favorite column: Wil Power. REVIEWS: Samsung SyncMaster 210T, Microsoft SideWinder GamePad, HP Pavilion 9800, Dell Inspiron 8100  Inside Gaming Inside Gami

GREENSPEAK Come back Ion Storm! All is forgiven. ......160

## STAFF FRITORIAL: TOM PRICE

## Gaming Economics 101

Last week I received my \$300 tax rebate courtesy of Dubya and the Republicans, Now, I'm not going to get into some partisan political debate about the wisdom of cutting taxes in the face of an impending recession, and I'm not going to take cheap shots at the



guy who came in second in last year's election. Lord knows I don't want to get threatening hate mail like Wil O'Neal did from our surprisingly large contingent of right-wing readers. Heh, Rush is right, fellas!

But I must admit, I was happy to get it-\$300 is a lot of money to a lowly, underpaid game magazine editor like myself. The pay here at CGW is peanuts. No, really, those yucky orange candy ones. What can I say? The PC gaming industry is in a bit of a tull right now. But then it hit me: a plan to revitalize the industry with our new-found fortunes. Everyone, let's spend our tax rebates on gaming stuff.

I'm not trying to be a shill or anything, but think about it. If every gaming enthusiast out there spent their rebate on some new games, used it to upgrade a piece of hardware, or went out and bought a subscription to CGW (okay, now I'm being a shill), the industry as a whole would see a huge infusion of much-needed cash. That means fewer games being canceled, more advances in hardware technology, and more pages of quality editorial in your favorite gaming mags lunless Jeff Green bogarts the money and buys himself that big gold chain with the "Mack Daddy" medallion he's had his eye on).

Average gamers would reap benefits, too. Now you could finally afford to pay for those games you've been warez-ing for years (yeah, I'm talking to you), or all those countless "Collector's Editions" with the little pewter figurines that sit on top of your monitor and collect dust. Or what about those damn expensive GeForce3 cards? The rebate will make only a dent in the cost of one of those puppies, but it's a big dent. And what about all the game magazines? You could get 12 whole months of 35-year-old editors trying to sound hip and "with it," demo discs that actually work, and Jeff blathering on about nothing issue after issue. That's a sweet deal, dude!

C'mon folks, let's show our support for the hobby that makes us so happy, the pastime that keeps us up all hours of the night and ensures us a level of social maladiustment that will keep our therapists busy for years. Hey, there's another industry that could benefit!

As for me, well, I already blew all my money at the craps tables in Reno last weekend. But I get all my games for free anyway. Bwahahahaha! 6611











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## LETTERS

### Letter of the Month



The other day after "playing" WORLD WAR II ONLINE, I wondered if I could use the "release now, patch later" business model in my line of work. I am an auto-body man, and what I decided to do was repair the next customer's car I got as fast as possible—no matter what the cost. After I

was done, I had left out about 15 percent of the bolts and stuff, but the customer was very happy that their car was done so fast. Well, in a few days, the customer brought the car back complaining about wind noise, water leaks, and the fact that the headlights didn't work. I explained to them that this was repair v1.01B and that they were beta testing it for me. This seemed to make them very angry. I told them all I had to do was install the patch and they would be good to go. After they left to take their car to another body shop, I started getting these strange phone calls from their lawyer. I can't imagine why. So this got me thinking: If I can't use this business practice, well, who can? I came up with a short list of professions that I trink could

- 1. President (of anything)
- 2 Surgeon
- 3. Air traffic controller
- 4. Interpreter
- 5. Console game developer
- B. Prostitute
- 7. Fast food worker
- 8. Wal-Mart greeter
- 9. CGW editor
- 10. The guy who shovels chicken shat

Unfortunately I think the rest of us are going to have to try to get it right the first time

Jacob Kresbach

## See? See Why We Hate Them?

What the hell have you guys been reviewing? Alphas? Pre-alphas? Your reviews, in general, suck. EMPEROR is like the best RTS out there. Crappy mutiplayer my ass. Bad pathfinding A!? Were you guys trying to lead a decimator through infantry rock again? Only 2.5 stars—jeez. PC Gamer gave it 89 percent. Even without patches TRIBES 2 is fun, but what did you guys do? Try to play online? How would you review it without patches if you have to get a patch before you log in?

From up here in Canada, go outside and play hide and go f\*\*k yourself. Eh?

#### Jane Mackingon

Hey now! What's with the potty mouth!? We cancelled the Canadian Corner and everything! What is it with you people? Sheeesh!

## CGW Editors: Cranky Self-Fulfilling Prophets of Doom?

All we hear from you folks these days is about the "impending doom" of PC gaming It's like an increasing layer of dust that is slowly coating every corner of your magazine Almost every article in issue 205 made mention of the feared "demise of the computer game." In some cases, the "need to alert the next of kin for the mouse and keyboard" was the focus. Aren't you shooting yourselves (and in turn, all of us) in the foot when you repeatedly print this? To borrow from Orwell, if you constantly reinforce that "war IS peace," then people will start to believe it. How do I know this? Because prior to reading your publication every month, I actually thought there was nothing wrong with Canadians, (By the way, thank you for enlightening me to the error of my ways.)

Please take a lesson from our politicians: If things look bad, deny, deny, deny, Repeat

Thanks for taking the time to promptly delete my email

Matt Brown

## Bewitched by Bejeweled



My Bejeweled score is 34,567 in Timed Trial Since this wasn't registered, you don't see a high score screen—so I took a pic of the screen while I was playing for proof!

Joshua Lilly

Let me start off by saying I have been a reader and subscriber for years. My girl friend "Bertie" has never understood the computer game fascination, so she was happy when my hard drive died. Using some outdated parts, I managed to get it running, but could play no games—that is, until I checked the September CGW CD. BEJEWELED sounded like something to try out until the new hard drive arrived. So I loaded it; she heard the clinking and the "Excellent!" sound and decided she'd like to try. I figured, okay, what the heck.

I have not been able to play on the computer at all since then, listide of a week,

she has wiped out the free trial and I have had to purchase the game for her

I thought your editor's scores were pretty good until this: Game Duration, 80.27 mins.; Gems Cleared, 3,795; Longest Cascade, 6; Best Single Moye, 2,100, and last, Level

## Coming Next Month— Best Issue Ever?

Be sure to be here next month when a whole new era begins for CGM We're not kidding. This is big. We're unveiling a brand-new redesign that we're sure you're gonna love. (And if you don't we're sure you'll let us know.) Same great magezine, same gang of geaks writing it—just a whole new look.

To help calebrate the new look, we're (unleashing a veritable gaggle of goodies.

Exclusive, Huge, hands-on evaluation of EVERQUEST, SHADOWS OF LUCLIN

A full copy of EVERQUEST on CD (yepthe whole game) in newsstand copies

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## LETTERS

13: 84,965 points. She doesn't think she's reached her peak yet, so I just thought I'd say, THANKS A LOT YOU GUYS Well I gotta go. She wants to use the computer again. Guess I'll go read a book or something...

#### MeonMan

I can't believe you would consider any score below 30,000 in BEJEWELED "godlike," I can get over 40,000 anytime. It just goes to show that you guys at *CGW* suck. By the way, my subscription to *CGW* is expiring. If you guys can beat me, maybe I'll consider renewing.

### Keng Chuah

We received numerous letters and screenshots from folks who had all beaten the formerly cocky Robert Coffey, who now, mercifully, has stopped crowing around the office about how great he is. Keep it up, gang!

## All He Is Saying Is Give TRIBES a Chance

I just got the October issue today, First off, Will O Neal's staff aditorial is freakin' great. I didn't have to wait until the last page for some laughs (Jeff rocksl). But my real reason for writing is to tell you to look at TRIBES 2 again [first reviewed in July 2001]. Reviewer Tom Price has no clue how to play the game ("I don't like spending three minutes walking across the map just to get blown up . . ."). All I have to say to him is, get a ride, dude, either as a tailguinner or a havoc strike team

You put a note in your WWII ONLINE review saying that it might not suck anymore and updates were coming, so look at TRIBES 2 again. The company got axed but the game continues, and a "healthy mod community" HAS blown up and saved the game—Tom was right about that at least. Look at the RENEGADES mod—you remember that from TRIBES I, right? It kicks ass and is just one of many things the best community in gaming has done to make TRIBES 2 great. Also, thanks to the Dynamix guys who put out the six new maps they had been working on.

D Poston aka BladeWalker

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## **Bring Out Your Dead**

Hey! I've got a hankerin' for GRIM FAN-DANGO, but I've already played through it a dozen times. Adventure games are da bomb, so tell LucasArts that they have fans wanting more of this dead Mexican dude! You proved that when it was inducted into the Hall of Fame a few months ago! I know they probably wouldn't listen since they haven't said anything about an adventure game lately, except for the incredibly gorgeous Verant-made STAR WARS RPG. The last one was ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND, which supposedly didn't live up to fans' standards, unfortunately. These guys have a cash cow goin', but they're not milking it! Someone needs to wake them up before they miss out on this opportunity.

#### Tim Lohrenz

Your point might be better received, sir, if you didn't refer to Mr. Manny Calavera as "this dead Mexican dude." Please—let's show a little respect here, people.

### If You Think He Sucks, You Should Read His Brother Jeff

Your magazine is great where reviews and previews of games are concerned. But Tom Green's column just talks about random stuff that has precious little to do with games. In the last issue [September



2001) he tells us how he got his poor daughter obsessed with EVERQUEST because it's all be talks about!

When I was 7, I was blasting my way through DOOM, and so what? Please persuade him to write more about the games themselves!

Samantha D.

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# Conquer, Expand.



Lord Takeda,

In this year of 1502 Civil War has erupted in Japan. Feudalism has arrived, turning mighboring claus into bitter rivals. Now you must enter the fray, my Lord, and command your armies with careful strategy. Through bravery honor and might you may sumeday re-unite Japan, and bring peace to our people.



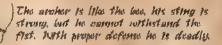
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Use each unit wisely, my Lord.

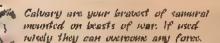
The swordsman is the brunt of your forces lethal in close combat to all but the colvery.

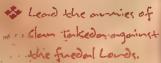
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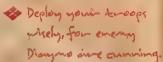
defension skills are strong like their heart.

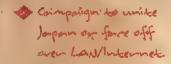


The etfle is new to this land, and care. lf you can aquire this technology, the strongest of samural can be cut down.



















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We couldn't agree more, Samantha. How the heck did he end up with Drew Barrymore, anyway?

## Praise for "Babes in Boyland"

Having gradually lost most of my interest and excitement in computer games, it was a while before I picked up the September issue of CGW. Flipping to the letters section, I noticed Brandon Raiston's letter to Holly Fleming.

It seems unfair that Ms. Fleming should receive such mane attention for the article she wrote. I know this is belated, as both the August and September issues are behind you now, but better late than never: "Babes in Boyland" was the most intelligent, amusing, entertaining article I have read in your magazine for as long as I can remember. It brought to light some human moments amidst that shameless barrage of juvenile advertising. I am thankful that you saw fit to publish such an insightful piece in your magazine.

Thank you, Holly. That blend of commentary and humor should be seen more often in such publications as these, which are frequently bogged down by the unavoidably repetitious nature of computer game iournalism.

Jeremy Walsh

## Why We Need Year-Round Schooling: A Case Study

Listen, CGW. I think you have the best mag, but the demos are junk. I mean, give us some games like SERIOUS SAM or COS-SACKS.

I have a question, too. My bro called me up and told me that the people who made MAX PAYNE went out of business. Is this true? And I have one thing to say to people who read this: Never stop being a PC gamer. I have an N64, an awesome computer, a PlayStation, 30 console games, and more than 40 computer games. Heck, I must play four hours of STARCHAFT, five hours of DIABLO II: LORD OF DESTRUCTION, and three console games at one hour each every day in summer, I will never stop.

#### David Z. (Dazz)

Okay, Dazz, By our count, that adds up to 12 hours of gaming every day. We're just gonna take a wild shot in the dark here. You don! have a girlfriend, Right?

## Maybe It'd Play in Wisconsin?

First, I want to start this letter by saying YOU GUYS ROCK!!! You know, they make simulations for all the most abstract things on earth, such as ants (SIMANT and the



new EMPIRE OF THE ANTS). If ant simulators can sell more than 1,000 copies, why don't they make a cow simulator? It would have the best simulation designer at the helm (Will Wright, of course), and Will could just grab a

couple of amateur designers and start the wheels a-turnin'. You could do so many things! You could try to produce the most milk and win the Best Bessie Award Your could try to serenade the hottest cow if you were a bull, and you could be in a bullriding championship and get to ram some of those annoying rodeo clowns.

If they ever make a game like this, I know what my hard-earned babysitting and burger-flipping money is going to be spent on.

#### Brett "KillerHampster" Smith

We're scared of our readers. Really, we are

## Jeff Green Is a Big Giant Trout

I am a nobody living in nowhere But enough about me. I would like to say that Jeff Green is the best person in the whole world-next to me, of course. I will think of inviting him to my house for some gummibear hunting and playing Drying Paint Simulator—isn't that just fun, and don't you wish you could come too? In your dreams!

Jeff Green does NOT deserve to take this abuse all day. Why the hell does he have to play "cool" games like UNREAL TOURNA-MENT and get beaten all the time, while he plays his more intelligent games like WINDOZE XP. Oh yeah, and let me reveal one of his secrets: Jell Green is in reality a big giant trout. Or at least his mom tells me he is. Tomorrow I will try to contact him about the squirrel factory I ordered, and about my attempt to overclock my PII processor to 234GHz. Where are those blast-proof CPU cases I ordered, Jeff?

#### TFRAkira001 The 291,000 watt, interstellar-travelcapable-fish

Have we mentioned that we're scared of our

## Help for a Jaded

Hello, I was just playing EVERQUEST and decided to quit. Yes, quit, and give all my stuff away at random. I thought playing an online RPG would be cool and that people would role-play. I was dead wrong! First off, I have been playing for almost two years, and most of the time when human greed would show its face, like in an auction or group play, I would just

ignore it, but I am at the end of my rope Even in a computer game, you can't escape greed and all the disgusting behavior it engenders. Now I look back to more singleplayer games, and I can't find one that I will play till the end-DEUS EX, UNDYING, COMMAND & CONQUER, THE LONGEST JOURNEY. The list goes on and on.

Is there any type of game out there that will keep my interest anymore? Consoles to me are dead, nothing more than sixth-gradelevel puzzle-solving and jump-jump-jumping. Is there a gaming environment left for me? Is HALF-LIFE the last game I will ever finish? If you could respond, feel free to give me suggestions on games that I might play till the end without getting bored to death. Or am I stuck downloading porn as my last outlet for thrills?

#### Grady G. Gilchrist Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

We can't officially comment on your last suggestion because we're not sure if our human resources department actually reads the magazine. So, before you take that route, try a few of our recent loves. MAX PAYNE, ANACHRONOX, or the BALDUR'S GATE II and DIABLO II expansions. And don't forget BEJEWELED!

## Self-Hating Washingtonian Corner

Now that those dog-sledding, fish-eating Canadians are over with, how about taking on a new place? Why don't you try Washington, where I live? I live in a town with a bunch of field-picking hicks. We live by a billion farms and ugly, fat, stinking cows. Either choose my state or get me the hell outta here

P.S. If you make this Letter of the Month, I will renew my subscription.

#### Chad Greenough Sedro-Woolley, Washington

What is it with all the talk about cows this month? Sorry we didn't make this Letter of the Month, Chad, but we did give you your own corner!





न्द्रकारियास्त्रियः मृती/श्रुपश्चि



egrafigelike ografigelike



Top 20 Games of E3

Tihosegped & Arenadad Daggerfills
the award-winning 1994 and 1996 RPGs of the Year.

from the heroic warrior to the secret assassin.

open and free for you to discover. Go anywhere you want and do anything you want.

NOSS GENERALIZATION Realistic textures and objects, incredible polygon counts, and advanced weather systems truly take you to another world.

politics and a huge variety of quests. Thousands of characters remember you and your actions.

with the PC version is "The Elder Scrolls

Construction Set". Create, share, and download

new characters, dungeons, quests and more.











#I Xhos Gree of Ed Gamesmania



Finding the LRPC of Show Office LPC Across



The Small of the Comment of the Comm



# TORIRO WIIINING

www.elderscrolls.com

The EldyStyles, Morrowas, Daggetor, Arena, Exec Scrots Constitution San Retinana Solwards and its input are night-fed thickness or unitertarial organistics.

# gcraping cotton candy off kiddie is a chore unworthy





LOG ON WWW.ULTIMATERIDEGAME.COM/DAMSEL TO LEARN HOW TO UNLOCK A NEW GAME PROP! KEYWORD: DAMSEL

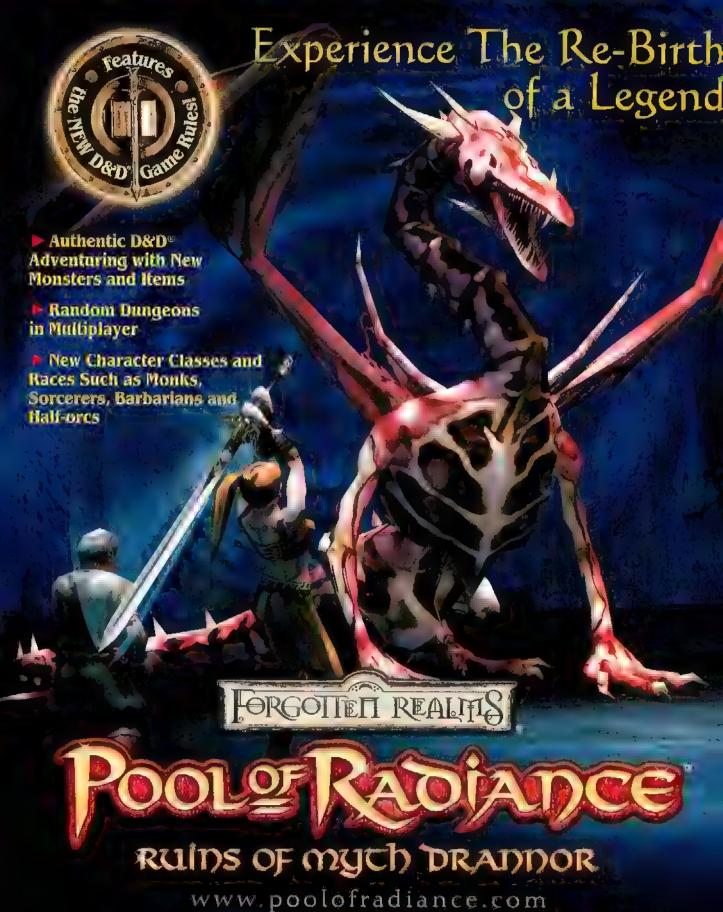


IN THE BUILD MODE, REAL-TIME FEEDBACK MEANS LESS TIME

# coasters of a Roller god.



WWW.ULTIMATERIDEGAME.COM



WINDOWS 95/98/ME

















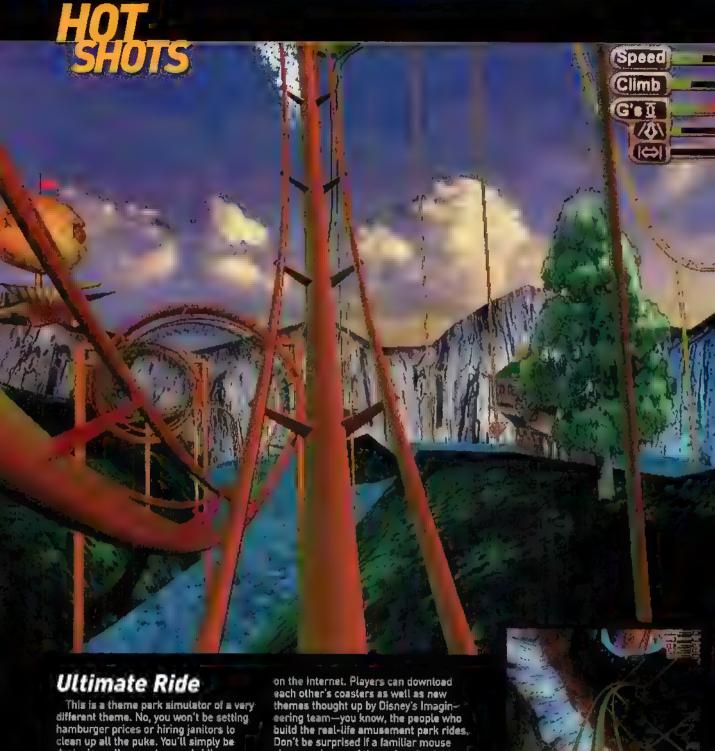
RED ALERT 2; YURI'S REVENGE and RENEGADE ... Call it the fran-chise that wouldn't die. The COMMAND & CONQUER name is one of the most popular in all of gaming. Not only because the RED ALERT games have been some of the top-selling real-time-strategy games on the market, but also because the earthbound sciencefiction COMMAND & CONQUER universe appeals to gamers young and old. The next two C&C games poised to rocket to the top of the charts-RED ALERT 2: YURI'S REVENGE and RENEGADE—are appealing for exactly that reason. YURI'S REVENGE is an expansion

pack for RED ALERT 2 that gives,

gamers a host of new missions, maps, and—what fans will appreciate most-units, without unbalancing the rock-solid RA2 gameplay. Fourteen new single-player missions, 10 co-op missions, and 20 new skirmish maps in various places and environments, including San Francisco, Hollywood, and the moon should keep RA2 gamers

busy for quite a while.

RENEGADE, on the other hand, has almost nothing to do with strategy, but instead puts you smack in the middle of the C&C universe as a foot soldier—as a member of the infamous Elite GDI Commando to be exact, and as Capt. Nick "Havoc" Parker, you'll get to see what the Hand of Nod looks like from the inside. And then you'll get to blow the holy Tiberium out of it. Cool. -Thierry Nguyen



hamburger prices or hiring janitors to clean up all the puke. You'll simply be designing roller coasters and riding them. That's right, like that old game COASTER. But this time your thrill-riding world will be rendered in breathtaking 3D and offer more options. Choose from among four environments (Mountain, Outer Space, Tunnel, or plain old Grid), three themes (Jules Verne, Dragon's Realm, and Outer Space), and three basic coaster styles (Steel, Wooden, and Hanging), and you'll be laying track in the easy-to-use editor in no time. Then strap in and test that baby out. Of course, this is a virtual world so don't worry about silly things like G-forces. Either challenge yourself in "Imagineering" mode with specific tasks, or build the most ridiculously twisted coaster you can and put it

Don't be surprised if a familiar mouse shows up in one of those downloadable themes. Look for our review in the next issue, -Tom Price





...end the ritual, before it begins...





In this classic adventure, you will take on the role of young Scotland Yard Detective Brent Halligan, assigned to solving the puzzle surrounding a mysterious order

In the course of their investigations, the engaging anti-hero and his ally, a young scientist, delve into almost forgotten secrets of the past. Aided by an expert on Druids, they finally travel back in time. Only in the distant past they will be able to find the key to saving the world but will they succeed?

- More than 50 impressive locations of the past and present
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- High resolution 2D / 3D graphics More than 20 speaking characters
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- Non linear dialogues
- Extensive real time soundtrack
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His menacing power guides the Trade Federation. Official Star Wars Web Site wyw.starwars.com



Rebel, Imperial, Gungan, Royal Naboo, Trade Federation, Wookide,

Virtuous or villainous? Annihilate or dominate? The ultimate outcome is up to you, as *Star Wars* Galactic Battlegrounds thrusts you into explosive real-time strategy conflicts spanning the entire *Star Wars* saga.

You're in control as six different civilizations clash in epic land, sea and air battles. With gameplay based on an enhanced Age of Empires\* engine, you'll command legions of troops in single and multi-player missions. Or design your own with the extensive campaign editor. You can even choose which side you'll fight for in this epic galactic struggle. Just remember, good or evil, hero or enemy, there is only one true commander — you.

For your pre-battle briefing, report to www.swgalacticbattlegrounds.com

## GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS

Real-time strategy on a galactic scale.





VIQUENCE



## Mall



Shop around for the perfect mate? Or get lucky on a first date? With The Sims Hot Date expansion pack, you get to be the matchmaker and watch as sparks fly or fizzle. Set up a secret rendezvous with a special friend or neighbor in the new downtown area filled with customizable shops, restaurants, bars and parks. Fulfill a dating fantaey with







# Maul



hot new characters like the buxom Blonde Bombshell or the virile Jock. Set the mood with romantic new objects like the Cuddle Couch or the Love Tub. Then make your move by blowing kisses, playing footsie or playing hard to get. You might just get lucky. Or you may just get a drink in the face. But it's not a hot date until you turn up the heat.



www.TheSims.com

www.eagames.com







lief it lite director Marty Stratton (back of his head, at least), animator Fred Nilsson, and designer Tim Willits: took on gamers in a "play CTF against id" event on Saturday, RIGHT: Just to hear id's announcements and Carmack's technical talk, press and public crammed the hall just outside the conference room. Can you spot the CGW editor onsite in this picture?

# KE FIRE AND





The GBA version of DOOM was also on display. The port has the familiar obnoxious sounds of imp fury and Jaggy graphics of pink demons getting torn in half by shotgun blasts. It's everything you loved about one of the greatest shooters ever, in a convenient, portable version. Yeah, baby.

generate a new game in which the Stroggos war (QUAKE II plot line) rages on. Since the development of QUAKE IV depends on the completion of DOOM 3, don't expect this for a long time.
Finally, id previewed more demo footage of

DODM 3, and Carmack discussed his work on

the engine, followed by his own thoughts on the 3D graphics card industry. There were no cameras allowed and no screens given out, so you'll have to rely on our impressions.

Perhaps the best way to describe the scene-of a new "pinky demon" leaping from the shadows and munching on a corpse is to say that It looked like a CG cut-scene from a RESIDENT EVIL game. It looked as detailed and frightening, and it moved as fluidly as a high-end cut-scene. In fact, the only reason I didn't dismiss the demo as mere marketing hype is that Carmack truly has the skills to pull it off, and he's one of the few no-bull members of the industry. He spoke about the graphics industry in technical gobbledygook that a mere handful of people understood. Here's the layman's summary of his keynote: GeForce3 chips are good, ATI has some interesting stuff coming up, and Direct3D is decent, but we still need a universal graphics card standard. He also sald that end-users can easily create on their home computers a scene that rivals a Pixar film or Shrek in looks lone of id's recent art hires, Fred Nilsson, was an animator for Shrek).

Tim Willits, design lead for DOOM 3 (still tentatively titled), offered few details on what will surely become the Next Big Thing in shooters. But he did say, "The general approach to designing DOOM 3 is focusing on the single-player story. The game's driving force will be its story, setting, atmosphere, and single-player-focused gameplay.... The biggest lesson I've learned from past games is the importance of predesign and planning. The entire story is already complete. . . . " Carmack summarizes DOOM 3 as "moremarines, zombles, and demons." Expect more DOOM 3 news from CGW as soon as we can find out more. दिनाया





What happens when you network 1,000: computers (top) in the Bring-Your-Own-Computer area? Power outage on the first day. The measly megawatt power supply (middle) crapped out, so id had to bring in a massive, gigawatt monstrosity (bottom). The entire town of Mesquite doesn't need a gigawatt of power, but QuakeCon did. Yowza.

### KING OF QUAKE

While the recognition of being named the best QUAKE III ARENA player is nice. John"zeRog" Hill has some real-world foot to snow for it, namely, a cool thirty

grand from NVIDIA. The plucky 17-yearlast year's QuakeCon and went all the way for the money this year. His decisive drubbing against one of the world's

premier players, ionnathan, fatality Wendel, 26-5, was further proof of his prowess at the game: Man alive, we're wondering what he'll win at next Vears QuakeCon

UPDATE

# COUNTER-STRIKE: **CONDITION ZERO**

### Gearbox takes over, plans new graphics and tech enhancements

One could easily get lost in the corporate soap opera that was the transfer of power in the development of the CONDIT ON ZERO add-on for COUNTER-STRIKE. Bouncing from Rogue Entertainment to Valve, it finally landed in the hands of veteran Valve partner Gearbox (creators of HALF-LIFE BLUE SHIFT). After engaging in a little tête-à-tête with Gearbox president Randy Pitchford, we've got the lowdown on what's changed since our July cover story.

Of the listed new weapons, only the M6o remains (alas, we were looking forward to the flesh-tearing power of the Pancor Jackhammer), and the new list is as follows the French FA MAS, the Israeli GALIL, the Molotov Cocktail (Terrorist only), the Gas Grenade (Counter-Terrorist only), the LAW Rocket, and assorted Items like a ballistic shield and pistol combo, a machete, a gas mask, a flare, and an ammo pelt

Prtchford also mentioned several enhancements to both gameplay and technology aimed at making CZ a fun single-player game. The mission-objective aspect of the design is retained and improved. Now completing objectives nets you cash, which you can use to get the traditional CS stuff and-another cool addition—to recruit characters. Yes, there will

be recruitable characters: Pitchford plans for you to "care about your squad. You're going to invest in recruiting them, and you're going to invest in training them to be better snipers or whatever skill you like, So, these guys now have unique faces and unlaue voices.

In the visuals, look for a BLUE SHIFT-style High Definition pack to be applied to CZ. New player models will have higher porygon counts (1,250, as opposed to 700 for the current models), and you can even see the eyes behind their Plexiglass eyeshleids, There will also be new uniforms and faces for all of the skins, allowing for more differentiation between players.

Hopefully, Gearbox will take the lessons of focus, design, and gameplay they learned for BLUE SHIFT and apply them here to make CONDITION ZERO a must have for COUNTER-STRIKE players everywhere. -Thierry Nauven







## **REALITY CHECK**

(1) (L) (1) (1)						
1	COW	PC Gamer	CGM	Gamespot	Adrenatine Vault	gamerankings.com
Alone in the Dane New Nightmare	C	C	B+	C	C-	C+
Anachronox	B+	A-		В	C-	В
Aparchy Unline .	C	B-	D	9	*	C+
Acca nini	C	A		B-	R	Α-
Balder's Gate II. Throne of Bhaal	A	A-	B+	A-	*	Α-
Desperados	B+	B+	*	C+	4	B+
Diable II: Lord of Destruction	A	В	A+	B+	B+	B+
Max Payne	A	A	*	A	A	A
Mech Commander 2	B-	B+	*	В	B+	B+
Starffeet Command Orion Pirates	B+	В	C	В	*	B+
World War II Online	D	C-	F	C	+	C

no rating available at press time

# Tom Clancy's



- MINE of the combat action you expect from Red Storm 10 nm single player missions in exotic and familiar locations
   6 new multiplayer-mode maps
   15 new weapons, including the M60 Machine gun
  - - . An ullmem "Lone Wolf" Multiplayer mode one heavily-armed player against all the rest!

STAND-ALONE HISSION PACK - DOES NOT REQUIRE ROGUE SPEAR















the U.S. version just went gold, but we've been playing the imal European version for the last month (and the

demo before that). This exactingly detailed sim-ulation of the modern combat experience is so gripping, it could be a contender for Game or the Year.



#### Shogun: Wartord Edition

Slaughtering 1,750 Samural warriors on the slopes of Mount Fujl is a. thrilling cilmax to the Kublai Khan campaign to rule Japan. The new units, campaigns, and improvements make WARLORD **EDITION** a must-have for those who haven't yet experienced this superbstrategy game.



It doesn't get much sadder than this. Three CGW editors wasted an afternoon it Sony's online gaming area (www.station.com) trying to woo women in this online version of the old, lame TV show. And guess what? The ladies hated them online just as much as they do in real life.



#### Samurai Jack

Yet another reason to watch Cartoon Network. With a mix of slow motion, quick cuts, bullet-time, and split screens, Samurai Jack has some of the most compelling fight scenes on television to date. We all want tattoos of Aku now.

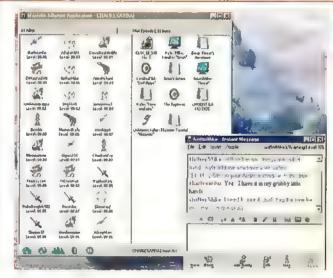
# Not Very Majestic Yet

## MAJESTIC may be different, but that doesn't mean it's fun

If you listen to fans of EA's new online only conspiracybusting game, MAJESTIC, you might think you were hear. ing the sound of a revolutionary new form of game being born, If you listen to MAJEST C's critics, though, all you hear is the sound of gamers being bored What's really going on?

As usual, some truth resides in both points of view, MAJESTIC deserves credit for trying to do something that hasn't been done before (or at least hadn't until the PR team promoting the

movie A.I. surprised everyone with a similar sort of online scavenger hunt this past sum mer). EA's vision of a computer game played out in real time using only the tools of the ordinary Web surfer-a Web browser, AOL Instant Messenger, your e-mail—is clever, especially when combined with middle-ofthe-night faxes arriving at your office and frantic phone calls. The potential for a neverbefore-experienced level of immersion in a gameworld is what is getting MAJESTIC's boosters so excited.



The exciting desktop gameworld of MAJESTIC.

User ID : M. Griffin (remote) n.e.



In the first episode, the "fun" parts of MAJESTIC, like this video conference, dribble in at a less-than-satisfying rate.

Unfortunately, the reality pales when compared to the concept so far, at least, in the game's free pilot episode (which you can sign up for at www.majesticthegame.com), the phone calls and faxes are few and the online gamepiay is slow, simplistic, and skimpy. Too much time is spent literally doing nothing while you wait for an e-mail to arrive or for a new link to be posted on a Website. And after you get the message or link, there's often nothing to do except click on it and then sit back to wait some more.

The result is a strictly linear experience that hardly qualifies as a game—it's more like watching a slideshow, at the pace of two or three sodes per day

Naturally, MAJESTIC's defenders say the game will get better as you go deeper. We hope it will if not, MAJESTIC may well go down in gaming history as one of the greatest missed opportunities of all time. —Charles Ardai

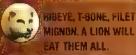
Watch for a full review of MAJESTIC next month in CGW



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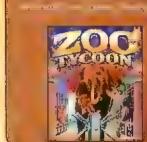








#### ALL SHE NEEDS IS A GOOD SALAD BAR.









Microsoft microsoft.com/games/zootycoon

# DYNAMIX:

**End of a Dynasty** 

Sierra shutters the legendary studio behind RED BARON, KRONDOR, and TRIBES By Sandy Brundage

You could smell the change about to happen at Sierra, A six-month hiring freeze, no green lights for new projects but the official word from Sierra (owned by Vivendi Universal) surprised many. It was a dreary epitaph for a studio that lived up to its motto: Make Great Games

Sierra, as part of a "strategic reorganization that will improve operating efficiencies through the consolidation of non developmental functions" shut down Dynamix on August 13. The 17-year-old studio, with a staff of 97 and a reputation as the profit center for Sierra, racked up successes like RED BARON, BETRAYAL AI KRONDOR, STARSIEGE TRIBES, and this year's best-selling TRIBES 2. Dismayed fans immediately petitioned for its resurrection (www.PetitionOnline.com/savedyna/petition.html).

#### **Brewing Great Games**

Dynamix was known for more than Just games "One time [some Dynamix employees] let slip that they liked good beer, so from then on people tried to bribe them. Some delivered beer to Dynamix to try to get on the beta test," said Alex Rodberg, Sierra brand manager.

The legend grew. Dave Georgeson, now ex-producer on TRIBES 2, remembered a kid who showed up at Dynamix one day,

#### "Us Versus Them"

But as the Gathering of Developers also rearned, the financial shelter of a big corporation like Take Two Interactive or Vivendi isn't free Neis Bruckner, a fixture at the studio from the pre-Sierra days through the start of TRIBES 2, watched Dynamix change from an "amazing place to work with a great team feel" to one with an unhealthy corporate atmosphere as first Sierra, and later Vivendi, took the reins.

"A tendency developed to hide problems because otherwise 'they' might cancel 'us,' "he said." This fed to a lot of 'Surprise, we are gonna be late—really late' situations. That eroded trust and led to even greater separation between departments. Accountability gets filtered at big companies, so the problems didn't get fixed."

Georgeson feels differently "I've gone over and over this in my head and can't see a reason. TRIBES a was successful, selling over 200,000 units and continuing to sell I think what happened was that Sierra was to d by Vivendi to lose employees, and Dynamix was easiest to cut." The team could have been sold to a company like Microsoft, or become an external team like Blizzard or Relic Entertainment to minimize the risk to Sierra. "Practically anything except just cut all that talent."

### "I THINK WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT SIERRA WAS TOLD BY VIVENDI TO LOSE EMPLOYEES, AND DYNAMIX WAS EASIEST TO CUT."

morn in tow. "She had asked him, "What's the place you most want to visit?' And he answered, 'Dynamix.' So she bought him a plane ticket. Our reputation as beer drinkers had preceded us, so he convinced his morn that she had to buy beer before showing up. It was a hoot. This guy and his morn, taking a tour around the dev team with the kid passing out beers."

TRIBES 2, unleashed in March, has already raked in more than \$7 million despite its premature release in a buggy state. It should be a profitable title by anyone's standards. How could so much money add up to layoffs? One employee pointed a finger at the development budget, large enough to make breaking even impossible, and called the STARSIEGE TRIBES franchise a "huge money sink for Sierra."

#### And the Band Plays On

While Slerra employees enjoyed a company bash complete with hula lessons and steel drums, the Dynamix casualties attempted to band together For a while Georgeson sought financial backing to form a new studio, and then joined Verant as executive producer for PLANE ISIDE

Meanwhile, the TRIBES franchise lives on. Sierra said, "Work continues on a patch and a playable demo. The authentication servers are up and staying that way IRC servers should continue as they are. The forums on Tribesa.com are strong and thriving Nobody needs to worky about their favorite game going away."

No, they're just saying a forced farewell to the studio that made it





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# **Scooter Cries Wolf**

# Hands-on impressions of RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

After spending some time with RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTE N, in both single-player and multiplayer modes, we're beginning to see the results of the extra labor going into the project. We particularly liked a later level in the single-player game set in a Nazicontrolled chateau; it features a breathtaking jump through a skylight to take out hapless Nazis below. Greasing goose-steppers has never been so electrifying

Multiplayer is a mix of TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC and UT-style Assault scenarios. That is, you have two teams with specific objectives, and each player can choose from a variety of classes, including medics, engineers, and soldiers. Each class can have a customized armament, so soldiers can carry flamethrowers, Venom guns, or Thomson submachine guns. Engineers can demolish structures and repair items, medics can revive players in the field, and lieutenants can both distribute ammo and call in support elements (air strikes and

artillery fire)

We played two maps: In the first one, the Allies had to storm a beachhead, stear Nazi documents, and get out. The other required the Allies to destroy a Nazi radio tower Playing as a soldier is straightforward. You just run in and shoot, regardless of the weapon you're carrying. Engineers tend to be more vital for mission success, as they breach bases, destroy objectives, or flx defense mechanisms. Medics are important for game speed: If you get killed on the field, you won't respawn for a long time without a medic. But a medic can run in and get you back on your feet within moments, making sure no one is out of commission for too long. Lieutenants are the most interesting because they're the sole source of ammo (besides corpses), and they can throw flares to summon support elements. I used one such flare to flush out a trench full of Allies by calling in an air strike. near their landing boats. What a pity to see the flower of democracy floating in the waves. Hopefully, the developers will give us plenty of opportunities to experience all the different player types with an interesting variety of maps

Watch for WOLF to be in stores later this year. —Thierry "Scooter" Nguyen



## Titus Takes Over Interplay

in two moves announced in rapid succession in August, French gam-Ing company Titus Interactive wrested control of Interplay and ended its role as a game publisher. While Interplay will continue to develop PC and video games, Titus announced that French-owned publisher Vivendi Universal will publish Interplay's games in the U.S. Interplay's marketing and distribution staff is expected to join the 60 employees Interplay laid off earlier this year.

Titus took over interplay by increasing their stake in the company's stock to 51 percent. A Titus spokesperson said that the takeover wasn't a surprise to interplay because Titus converted a \$20 million loan they had

made to Interplay for preferred stock in the company.

What does the takeover mean for fans of interplay's PC titles like the BALDUR'S GATE series? Interplay declined to comment, but Corinne Puissant at Titus said that Interplay's games would not undergo review by Titus and that the Interplay braind would be retained. When we asked if Titus would require Interplay to place a greater emphasis on console games, Puissant replied, "Interplay has a 2001 release schedule placing more emphasis on the next generation console market, while still supporting the PC role-playing genre, which has been interplay's strength historically'

Interplay has been struggling financially for some time. The company announced dismal second-quarter results for 2001, losing \$12.4 milliona whopping 550-percent increase over a loss of \$1.9 million in the yearearlier quarter. Shares in Interplay (IPLY) have been trading for less than \$2 as a result. In addition, in its report interplay warned that it was in violation of some financial agreements and was paying \$250,000 in

The latest news followed Interplay's announcement in late July that it was laying off 60 employees and canceling the development of TORN. Although Interplay's RPG division Black Isle Studios seemed to emerge unscathed, other game divisions like 14 Degrees East (FALLOUT, FALLOUT

TACTICS) were gutted

Meanwhile, although it has not been announced, sources within Interplay say that ICEWIND DALE II is in development and is scheduled to ship before Christmas. -Mark Asher

# Death, Stabbing Blamed on Counter-Strike

Yahoo News reported in late August that a Singapore man allegedly stabbed a teenager for killing his character in COUNTER STRIKE Daniel Tan Thiam Soon, 21, was accused of stabbing 16-year old Ng Qiyong in the back at an entertainment center in Singapore. Qiyong suffered a deep cut that required stitches, and Tan was arrested

Around the same time, authorities in Thailand reported that a mandied from heart failure after an all-night round of COUNTER-STRIKE. Twenty-two-year-old Thanet Sommol, a Thai factory worker, was found dead at his computer terminal in an Internet cafe in Chiang Mai Police said his friends told them he was addicted to the game and played it from Wednesday evening until he was found slumped over the computer's keyboard at noon on Thursday.



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Consumer Products





Establishing software release dates is as tricky as trying to predict which black gaming T-shirt Scooter is going to wear on a given day. These dates represent the best available info we had at press time. If you're a publisher, send your updates to: cowletters extitudes com

### Updates



DUNGEON SIEGE: Well, It's delayed again, but let's temper our disappointment with a reminder that these things are usually for the best. Chris Taylor and company decided they needed extra time to properly balance the gameplayand that's what we all want, right? So keep your shorts on and go back to DIABLO II in the meantime.



DARK AGE OF CAMELOT In late August, Mythic Entertainment began the fourth round of beta testing on their upcoming massively multiplayer RPG set in Europe's mythical past, and they're still predicting a mid-October release. Let's hope they've learned their lessons from the other recent, disastrous, too-soon MMORPG releases and take their

time getting it to work first.



COMANCHE 4. This one scares us a little. NovaLogic is touting the next version of their popular hellcopter sim franchise as more actionorlented, and from what we've seen so far, they ain't kiddin'. We actually saw this demo'ed with a mouse and keyboard, with a helicopter taking repeated slams against a cliff like a flying version of TWISTED METAL, Yikes.



MOTOR CITY ONLINE: Two years after we first wrote about it, EA has finally begun beta testing their one-of-akind online massively multiplayer auto racing game—and the early word, we're happy to report, is good. Any game that lets us tinker in an online garage, flx up hot rods, and beat you out of your pink slip is one we want to play—but we were worried it'd never happen. Now that it looks like it's really on track, we're revved up for it all over again.

Age of Mythology Ensemble Age of Wonders II: The Wizard's Throne 600 Aliens vs. Predator 2 Monolith AuusNox Fishlank Interactive (PROME) Arx Fatalis Cishtang Interactive Asheron's Call: Dark Majesty Microsoft Asharan's Call 2 Microsoft Comenche 4 NovaLonio Combat Mission 2 Big Time Seltware Commander Jill Standack Command & Conquer: Renegade Westwood Counter-Strike: Condition Zero Sierra TRANS Dark Age of Camolot Steers Destroyer Command UtilSoll Daux Ex 2 Fidos Die Hard: Nakatomi Plaza Sierra OPEAN Olsciples II: Dark Prophecy Strategy First Oragon's Lair 3D Blue Bylo Duke Nukem Forever 3D Reasons Cream Dungeon Slege Microsoft Earth & Beyond Westwood Elder Scrolls: Marrawind Lethesda Empire Earth Sterra Elherlords Strategy First Europa Universalis II Strategy First **CARRY EverQuest: Shadows of Luctin Verant** Flight Simulator 2002 Microsoft Freedom Force Crave Galactic Civilizations Stardner Global Operations Crave CED Halo M.crosoft

CHEATE Heroes of Might and Magic IV 100

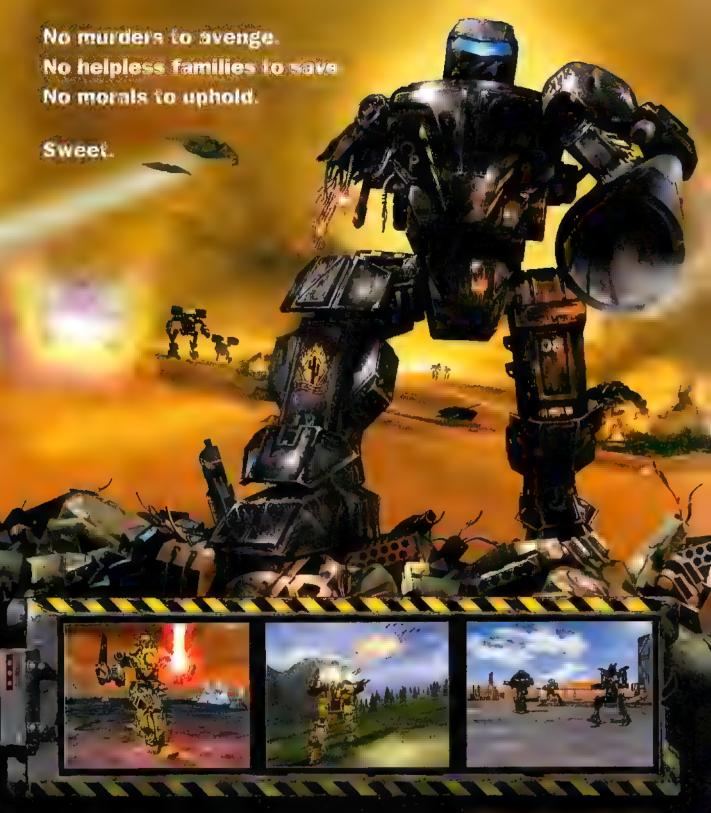
Hidden & Dangerous 2 600

II-2 Sturmovik Un Soft

Fail 2002 Fall 2001

Spring 2002 Imperium Galactica 3: Genesis COV Spring 2802 Master of Orion 3 Informates Winter 2001 ODER Medet of Honor: Allied Assault CA Fail 2001 Midgard Funcom January 2002 Might and Magic IX: Writ of Fate 300 Winter 2001 Mutur City Online Electronic Arts Winter 2082 Myth HI: The Wolf Age GOD Winter 2001. Neverwinter Nights faterplay Fall 2001 Nexagon: The Pit Strategy First Spring 2002 O.R.B. Stratngy First Fall 2001 Planetside Verant Fall 2001 Republic: The Acvalution Endos Winder 2001 Return to Wolfenstein Activision Summer 2001 Sid Meler's Civilization III integrames Summer 2012 Sid Meier's SimGolf EA Fall 2001 Stoma: The Adventures of Rex Chance Microsnit January 2802 Simsville FA Fall 2001 Sims Online EA January 2002 Soldier of Fortune N: Double Hellx Activision January 2002 Sovereign Sony Online Entertainment Winter 2001 Star Trak: Borg Assimilator Activesion Star Trek: Bridge Commander Activision Star Wars: Galactic Battleground LucasArts Nevember 2001 Star Wars: Galaxies LucasArts Winter 2001 Star Wars Jedi Dutcast: Jedi Knight II LucasArts Winter 2001 Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic LucasArts Fall 2001 Stronghold Take 2 Christmas 2001 Team Fortress 2 Sierra Fail 2002 Thef III Edgs Tom Clancy's Ghost Recen UniSall Winter 2001 String 2002 Unreal If Infogrames Winter 2001 WarCraft III Olizzant Winter 2001 War World of War Craft Blozzard Zoo Tycoon Mirereselt November 2001

Spring 2002 Spring 2002 February 2002 Surmer 2902 Baring 2012 Fall 2001 Winter 2001 Winter 2001 Spring 2002 November 2001 Einmei 2002 Summer 2802 Winter 2801 Falt 2401 Fall Edition Fall 2401 Spring 2082 Summer 2002 Winter 2001 Summer 2002 Winter 2001 Fall 2001 Fall Zilli1 Spring 2003 apping 2002 Fall 20002 October 2001 Spring 2003 Summer 2002 Spring 2002 Spring Entry Spring 2002 Eventually Fall 2001



You're the Bleck Knight and you've got better things to do. Like lead an infamous legion of rogue mercenaries into bettle, trade weapons on the black market, even fight for the ruthless House Steiner. All while piloting the most bedase 'Meche even: Welcome to the darker side of MechWernion.. Black Knight. Where it's good to be bad,









**Microsoft** 

microsoft.com/games/mw4\_blackknight/.

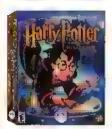
## THIS MONTH'S TOP 5



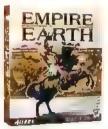
Everquest: Shadows of Luclin (VERANT INTERACTIVE. With a new territory to explore, with it's own secrets, artifacts, and unique monsters now game elements, including a new player race and class, plus an upgraded 3-D graphics engine, this expansion will open a new world to players—literally!



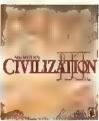
The Sims Expansion: Hot Data (CA GAMES) Hot Date will not only add new character models and objects that players can buy for their houses, it'll also loature dating between sims. Players will be able to either have their sim ask another sim out, or use a new in game matching service.



Harry Patter and the Sorcerer's Stone IEA GAMES, Play the role of Harry Potter is you snook, climb, and jump through 3-O environments. Play last-paced, areado-style Quiddich and interact with more than 20 characters as you battle ovid creatures using all of your newlound magical abules.



Empire Earth (stemm stopios)
This game promises to be the promiter historical real time strategy game, as accessible as Age of Empires, but with far more excitoment and deplin, offering players unprecedented freedom to customize both the historical scope of their game and the character of their civilizations.



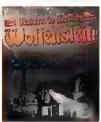
Civilization III (INFORMATES)
A whole new dimension of strategy and possibility that was absent in print Civilization games is created by integrating the concept of culture into the Civilization universe. Brute military force is no longer the only option you have for conquering enemy civilizations.

### THIS MONTH'S TOP 5

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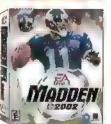
Pool of Radiance. Ruins of Myth Drannor GAME STUDIOS. The first game to incorporate life new 3rd edit on D&D ruies, features new races and offers new class abities, apellis, and heroic feats. Your journey back into the Forgotten Roalms promises to never offer the same experience twice.



Return to Castle Waifenstein (ACTIVISSIAN) Id's Clunke III graphics engine brings the gloomy castle and its evil denizens to life. You'll play as B.J. Blazkowicz, a covert Allied supersolder with a massive chip on his shoulder and an Indiana Jones a zed hatred for Nazis, as he inhitrates and brings down the evil castle.



Command & Conquer Red Alert 2 Expansion Yuru's Revenge to Advise. Two months after the events of Red Alert 2 Yuri and an army of psychic soldiers reappear. An emergency team composed of core Alfred members is hastily assembled and is sant back in time to stop Yuri before he takes over the world.



Madden NFL 2002 (EA Sports) EA Sports looked back on Madden 2001 to see what they could change or refine to make it a little more real ship. This game comes with improved defensive Al, which has also been affected by an increase in different player animations, better graphics, and knock-park blocks.

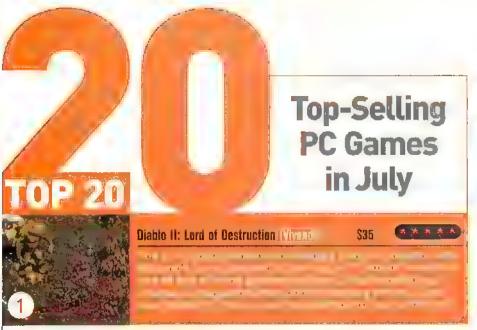


MS flight Simulator Pro 2002 (MICROSOFT, Flight Simulator 2002 is the new edition of Microsoft's highly realistic, graphically advanced is ght simulator, the best-selling PC flight simulation game over and includes real-time, nteractive Air Traffic Control (ATC), stunning new scenery and visual pillocis.

amazon.com.

Commuter & Video bannes store at

All available now at the



The Sims (Electronic Arts)

\$42

This game is destined for the Hall of Fame. And the revenues it's generating as a best-se ler could easily put it at the top of the all-time PC gaming money-makers. It's gotta be killing



The Sims: House Party (Electronic Arts)

Microsoft that they didn't publish It

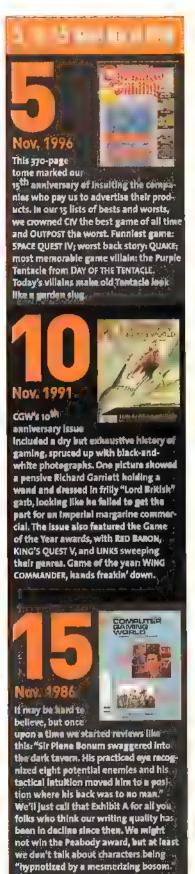
¢90

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We're ready to move on to the next SIMS expansion, HOLDALE But until that's released, HOUSE PARTY Is still the add-on of choice for those who can't get enough of playing with virtual people's lives



O Diablo II Vivendi	\$38	
Roller Coaster Tycoon Inlugrances	\$27	*
(3) MS Flight Simulator 2000 Microsoft	\$30	*
7 The Sims: Livin' Large Expansion Electronic Arts	\$29	
Max Payne GodGames	\$49	( · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Age of Empires II: Age of Kings Microsoft	\$43	
1 Half-Life: Blue Shift Vivendi	\$29	( A
Black & White Electronic Arts	\$42	
MS Train Simulator Microsoft	\$46	*
Baidur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal Interplay	\$30	
Roller Coaster Tycoon: Loopy Landscapes Infogrames	\$28	*
(B) Myst III Exile Ubi Soft	\$42	***
(B) Sim Theme Park Electronic Arts	\$20	*
<b>(7)</b> Emperor: Battle for Dune Electronic Arts	\$42	
Anarchy Online Funcem	\$48	**
Backyard Baseball 2001 Infogrames	\$20	*
② SimCity 3000 Electronic Arts	\$19	* * * * *



Then again, perhaps we should.

With King Arthur dead the Realms

of Albion Midgard and Hibernia are
locked in a mortal struggle

All three must protect their territory and
predicts Relics from the enemy or risk being overrun.

Built of myth and larged from magic Dark Age of Camelor, an immersive manually multiplayer online role playing game drawing on Arthuran legends. Non-mythology and Care to

# Explore 3 vast mythologically-mappined realmo

the comment of the second seco

arsenal of vycapons, sp into now magic and alege ignic expand and hold a to-your realins territory.

The state of the s

countless adventures to both the new player and veteran alike

Build siege weapons, armor and other essential items via the game's revolutionary

Dark Age of Camelot's oconomy even includes player housing.



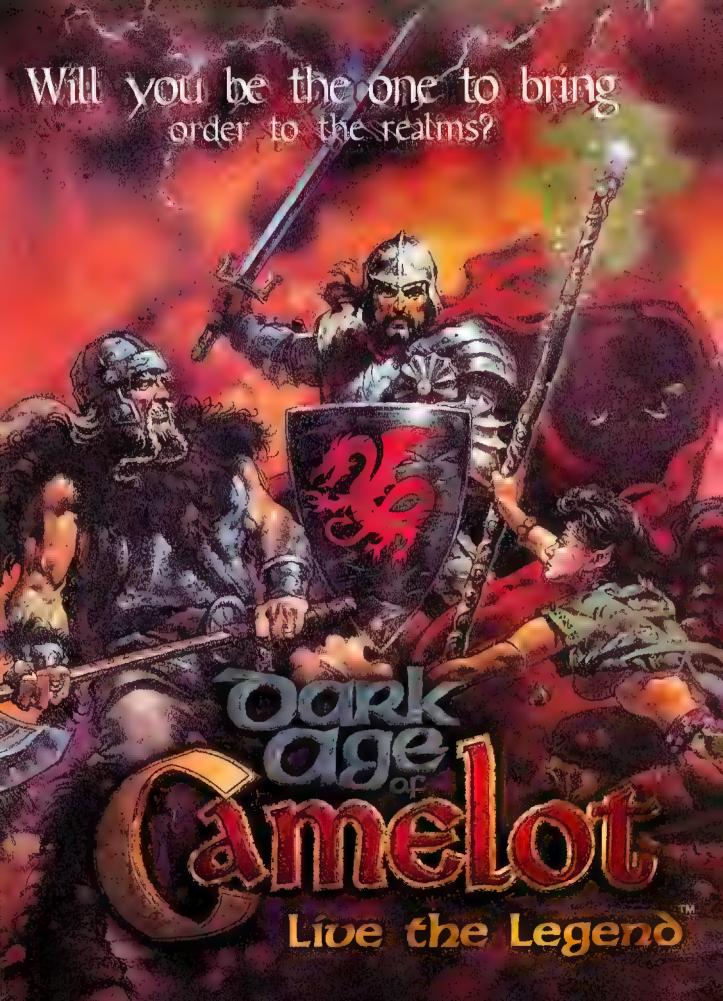
www.darkageofcamelot.com











# **PREVIEW**



ow do you follow up on the gold standard in single-player tactical shooters? That's been Red Storm Entertainment's challenge since the release of their landmark RAINBOW SIX: ROGUE SPEAR, CGW's 1999 Action Game of the Year. Their answer is to do something different—by heading outdoors and undertaking a serious ground combat sim, as opposed to the close-quarters counter-terrorism that has been Red Storm's trademark.

GROST RECON concentrates on the small-unit tactics of infantry combat. Commanding a team of heavily armed elite soldiers, you'll engage in outdoor firefights in large areas in forgotten corners of Eastern Europe. Your soldiers will infiltrate hostile territory to neutralize military targets or support allied forces. You're not bagging tangos anymore; now you're after tanks.

GENRE: Combat simulation. RELEASE DATE: 01 2002 PUBLISHER: Uhi Soft.

**DEVELOPER: Rad Storm Entertainment** CONTACT: www.redstorm.com.

# RED STORM TAKES GAMERS ONTO THE 21ST-CENTURY BATTLEFIELD BY RAPHAEL LIBERATORE



GHOST RECON's new engine allows for more scenery and, consequently, more places to hide your troops. But beware that your enemies are probably hiding just as well.







The detailed mission planning of the RAINBOW SIX games isn't appropriate in a combat environment, so it won't appear in GR. Instead, players will issue live commands during bat tle, just as soldiers do. More noticeably, GHOST RECON will sport a new engine, totally new characters, a new story line, and a new way to control fire teams. Using a combination of command screens and hotkeys, you'll control your team's fire and movement tactics in a variety of positions, including low-crawl, prone, and standing, viewed from either a first- or third-person perspective. Waypoints are easy to control, and there's an RPG-tite mode, with soldiers honing and advancing their skills with each successful mission.

#### Operation: Impressive Area

Each mission begins with a briefing, after which you select and outfit your team. Fifteen missions will vary from peacekeeping operations to direct action strikes and artillery support Sometimes your team will work independently, other times you'll call in assistance from troops in tanks, helicopters, and close air support. In many cases, you'll be working with NATO forces to light against rebelsoldiers led by an insane dictator. Some missions require you to blow up bridges to stop an advance, bust tanks, raid rebel bases, and rescue an American pilot who gets shot down behind enemy lines. As the game unfolds, a number of specialists will become available to your handpicked team.

Maps are large and detailed, so

your soldiers will need to recon areas more often so they can better understand how to achieve their objectives. As in real-life combat, camouflage will enhance your soldiers' ability to survive in nostile environments, Likewise, enemy troops will take advantage of terrain for fire and movement, making them more difficult to interdict

#### Tools of the Trade

One of the coolest aspects of the game is that it lets you play with state-of-the-art weapons, like the Army's new Land Warrior weapons system. The Land Warrior includes a portable computer, a GPS system. and a small eveniece that shows the location of your troops Because suppression fire is just as important as tank busting, GHOST RECON members will be packing serious firepower, like the military's new Objective Individual Combat Weapon-a combination rifle and grenade tauncher that fires 20mm explosive rounds—as well as the MG3 Machine Gun and the M136 Anti-Tank Rocket, Add ballistic effects such as hitting two opponents standing back to back with a high velocity round capable of hit-specific damage, and you're getting serious. realism out of this weaponry

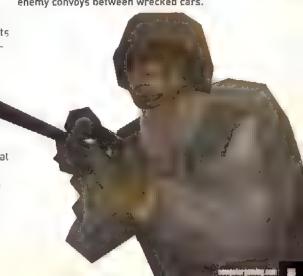
GHOST RECON should give gamers a good idea of what being a 21st-century foot soldier is about. That it will be brought to us by the folks behind the RAINBOW SIX games gives us reason to believe that we'll be playing one of the best soldier sims around. GHOST RECON hits the combat zone in early 2002. GCT



As a foot soldier in GHOST RECON, you'll have vehicles like this fully loaded tank backing you up.



The broken streets of ruined cities provide opportunities for missions such as trapping and ambushing enemy convoys between wrecked cars.



# THE ROTOR MAYHEM MAGIC & MAYHEM

•A one-of-a-kind blend of strategy, tactical combat, and role-playing.

·Bight-player multiplayer support.

\*Unique magic system allows you to change the spells and creatures you bring into battle each time

 Master an arsenal of more than 50 different spells, including Meteor
 Shower

Gummon 22 different types of creatures, including giants, dragons, knights, and more.

Spellbinding Real-Time Sorcery and Strategy









Bethesda SOFTWORKS INC. a Zenimax Media company





Download the demo at www.bethsoft.com

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HEAT (righ Explosive Anti-Tank) rockel intended to destroy light armored vehicles. The HEAT round is capable of penetraling 420mm of armor in addition to the HEAT, the M136 can also file an HP [High Penetration] round that is capable of penetraling up to 600mm of armor, sufficient to overcome the armor of most main pattle tanks.

SUBMACHINE GUNS

MP5: The MP5 is a submachine gon that fires a 9x19-nm pistol ammunition round. The selector allows the MP5 safe, semigutomatic, 3 round bursts and fully automatic modes of fire from a 38-round magazine. Both military and police forces around the world use the MP5.

MPSSD: The MPSSD is the MPS submachine gun equipped with an integral silencer, it fires a subsonic 9mm round. The combination of subsonic ammunition and silencer means that the sound of the firing mechanism is about the only sound you hear when you fire this weapon.

RIFLES

M24: The M24 weapons system is the current super rifle system of the U.S. Army It is a bolt-action rifle, firing a 7.62x51 mm round. It has a 6-round integral magazine and a 10-power tele scopic sight.

L96A1: This is a bolt-action, single-shot rifle fring 7.62x51mm ammunition. It has a 10 round hox magazine that feeds just in front of the trigger Empty, the weapon weighs approximately 6.4 kilos.

SVO: The SVO, or Dragunov, is a semiautomatic rifle firing 7-62x54mm ammunition of Russian design. It is fed from a 10-round box magazine that loads in front of the trigger. The SVO weighs approximately 4.3 k tos.

M82A1: The M82A1 is a 0.50-caliber semiautomatic title. The extreme power of this round makes It deal for taking out light armored vehicles. The weapon is fed from a 18-round box magazine that is mounted right in front of the trigger

M16A2: The M16A2 is the standard U.S. Armysuc rifle. It is semi-automatic and fires 5.56x46mm ammunition. The weapon is fed by a 30-round mag at neithal mounts just forward of the trigger. The M16A2 has a selector with a safe single-shot and a 3-round burst position.

M16/M203: This variant of the M16AZ rifle comes with the M203 underbarrel 40mm grenade launcher attached. The M203 is a single shot, breech load into weapon.

OTCW: The Objective Individual Combat Weapon is a weapons system currently being tested for possible implementation by the U.S. Army, it consists of an assault rifle capable of firing 5-56x45mm ammunition and a 20mm seminatomatic grenade launcher. The grenade launcher bairet is mounted above the rifle bairet, and the launchor loads from a 6-round magazine near the rear of the weapon in a bullpup configuration, You can separate the two systems and ase the lighter assault in the only position independently of the grenado launcher.

#### CARBINES

M4: This is a scaked-down version of the M16 rifte. SA-B0: Much as the M4 is a scaked-down version of the M16, the SA-B0 is a scaked-down carbine version of the L85 individual weapon. It fires the NAIO-standard 5 56x45mm round from a 30 cound magazine loaded into the weapon in a bullpup continuation.

#### LIGHT MACHINE GUNS

RPK74: The RPK74 is a heavier variant of the AK74 assant: rifle. The hairel has been extended and made heavier to support the rote of hight machine gun. Like the AK74, the RPK74 fires a 5.45x39 nm round. Empty, the weapon weighs approximately 4.6 kilos.

M249 SAW: The M249 SAW, Squad Automatic Weapon) is the light support weapon currently used on the squad level in the U.S. Army. The M249 fires the same 5.56x45mm ammention as the M16, and it can use M16 magazines, though it's usually fed from a 200-round box madazine.

MG3: The MG3 fires a 7.62x51mm round. A special drum has been manufactures to hold 100 rounds of the bioxed ammunition for the weapon. As or ginally made, the MG3 supported only bett-fed ammunition and did not have a box for feeding ammunition. With the bipod mounted on the front of this weapon, the MG3 weighs approximately 11.05 k-los.

#### **PISTOLS**

M9: The M9 is the standard-issue sidearm currently in use by the U.S. Army. It is a 9mm pistol with a magazine capacity of 15 rounds. It replaced the 0.45 caliber M1911

M9SD: The M9SD is the standard M9 pistor equipped with a silence. The SD variant uses a subsonic ammunition to keep the firing even quieter, but it sacrifices power





# MECHWARRIOR IV: **BLACK KNIGHT**

## More guns, more mechs, more worlds— nuff said

by Robert Coffey

All I want for Christmas is an Ultra 20 Autocannon. And I'm going to get it, thanks to Cyberlore (creators of MAJESTY) and Microsoft (creators of suffocating monopolies). That big, nasty gun and a whole lot more will be packed into the MECHWARRIOR IV: BLACK KNIGHT expansion pack for everyone's favorite giant robot game.

Hardcore mech fans are going to love this pack. With more than 20 new missions, all jacked up to a difficulty approximating godawful hellacrousness, BLACK KNIGHT is investing heavily in the "More More More" philosophy of game design. Does this mean BLACK KNIGHT is going to revolutionize and redefine mech combat? Nope. Does it mean that with 5 new mechs, 5 new multiplayer games, 2 new planet types, 10 new vehicles, new weapons, and more that MECH-WARRIOR fans are going to be too busy torso-twisting and slinging missiles to care? Yep

BLACK KN GHT's new story line sets the player up as a Black Legion mercenary lighting for House Steiner. While gameplay isn't going to change drastically. Cyberlore has made some nice additions to traditional mech-

action. In keeping with the mercenary premise of the game, a new Black Market feature will let players barter for their favorite weapons and chassis between missions, or just sell off the ones they don't need. And while the campaign is still basically an A-to-Bto-C affair, it has some exciting new flair at times, players will have a choice between two missions, each

affecting the other. For example, do you launch a raid on an installation to steal some new mechs, or do you take out an airfield first so your raid won't be plaqued by enemy air support? Then again, those new mechs would be just the thing for taking out the airfield

The five new mech types run the gamut from scout units to heavy



Barter your booty on the Black Market.



Just when you get used to dealing with hordes of mechs, you have to deal with a volcanic world that kills you for making the mistake of standing on it



A mech seeks out an enemy base secreted in a crater on the new mineral planet

assault mechs. New weaponry includes Ultra Autocannons, a vicious Xpulse laser (deadly but a really bad heat generator), and a shiny, happy Cluster Bomb variation of the Long Tom will help you fight back against a slew of new enemies, including my new (least) favorite, choppers with long-range missiles Now that's just not right

But perhaps the most exciting additions in MECHWARRIOR IV are the new battlegrounds. You'll fight on a lunar-like, mineral-rich planet that's constantly bombarded by meteorites. Loaded with huge crystalline structures perfect for blowing up and pockmarked by yawning craters ideal for enemy ambushes,

GENRE: Space simulation

RELEASE DATE: 04 2001

PUBLISHER Microsoft

DEVELOPER: Cyberlore

CONTACT: www.microsoft.com/
games/mechwarrior4

the landscape is bleak but beautiful Cyberlore has also added a ruined version of a cityscape from the source game. Players will be able to shoot each other through the gaps of the war-scarred buildings, seeking what little cover remains behind the crumbling shells of the few structures left standing.

But you'll encounter the coolest—and most challenging—of the new warzones during the final missions of the game. That world is a volcanic hell, a planet choked with smoke and floating embers. The volcano effects are beautiful, but deadly. Lava hot spots abound on the planet surface, and not only will they totally screw with your mech's heat management, the larger ones will actually start damaging the legs of your mech if you linger on them for more than a few seconds

The dropship should be leaving BLACK KNIGHT on store shelves just in time for the houdays.



# ZOO TYCOO Hey kids! Let's all go to the zoo!! by Robert Coffey













**GENRE: Rusiness simulation** 

**BELEASE DATE, 04 2001** 

PUBLISHER: Microsoft.

DEVELOPER: Blue Fang Games

CONTACT: www.bluefanggames.com

A is for Animals from lands far away.

B is the Business you'll build while you pla

C is for Carousel, spinning kids 'til they're dizzy.

D is for Design—making zoos keeps you bu

is for Excrement your zookeepers must sweep.

F is for Finance and the records you keep.

**G** is the Gift Shop where guests get their mementos.

H is for Hamburgers: You set the prices, yo add pimentos.

is for Interest, built by Tour Guides you nee

J is for Junior, the miracle panda you breed

K is for Kiddies who pour through your gate

is for Landscaping, raising and dropping tectonic plates.

M is the Money for which you must strive.

N is the Nurturing keeping critters alive.

Is the Opinions of guests that you see,

P is Pandemonium when a tiger gets free.

is the Quality maintained in each animal's habitat.

R is Researching new objects, buildings, an

5 is for Sandbox! Scenario! Two great ways play!

I is for Topiary that brightens the day.

 $lue{f U}$  is for Urine, that's why you build restroom

V is for Volume, make wide paths to give quests room.

W is for Waterfall to make these crocs feel

X is for Xylophone, 'cause it's always for xyl

Y is for Young and Old, who'll think this game's great,

Z is the Zillions it'll make for Bill Gates.

# MONOPOLY TYCOON

## Bringing out the Boss Tweed in all of us by Tom Price

Remember when you were a kid, sitting on the rumpus room floor with your little sister playing Monopoly and losing terribly? There you were, down to your last few colored bills, and you land on Boardwalk and it's covered in that little brat's hotels. She looks up at you with that gap-toothed grin and exclaims with an innocent lisp that belies her cutthroat nature: "Pay up sucker!" Remember how far you threw that godforsaken game board? I bet your Mom still hasn't found the top hat.

MONOPOLY TYCOON brings back that good old crap-on-your-neighbor competitiveness of the original board game but with an entirely new gameplay paradigm.

MONOPOLY TYCOON is definitely not just a computerized version of the Parker Brothers classic. Instead, it's a competitive strategy game where you light for control

GENRE: Strategy RELEASE DATE: 04 2001 PUBLISHER, Inlogrames

DEVELOPER: Deep Red

of an imaginary city with a host of cutthroat entrepreneurial tycoons repre sented by the

well-known Monopoly game pieces—race car, Iron, thimble, and so on

In fact the computer game has very little in common with the board game outside of familiar icons like the game pieces and the properties. Properties are represented as city blocks, where Boardwalk is still the most valuable and Baltic still one of the teast. Players can build more than just hotels and apartments on properties; they can build apartments or retail outlets. divided into daytime and nighttime businesses. Daytime businesses include things like butcher shops, toy stores, and newsstands, while nighttime businesses consist of things like bars, nightclubs, and other entertainment-oriented ventures. The whole point is to put your businesses in places where they will get enough traffic to generate income that exceeds their operating costs; the costs depend on a variety of factors, including the value of the property where they are located. So a clothing store on Broadway is going to have to make more money to cover its nut than a par on Mediterranean, Businesses in the same area will compete with or complement each other.



Let's face it, people love to shop. Your task is to make them love shopping at your stores.



Leases to properties are purchased at auctions—one element of the game that could get hot between human players.

Prayers can also compete to own the properties themselves by bidding on them at auction. This is another area where prayers go head to head in direct competition. Thankfully a little chat browser has been implemented into this screen to allow deals, trash-talking, or outright threats to take place between humans in a multiplayer match. Owning a property means not having to pay rent on the businesses you own on that property and collecting rent from other players

The possibilities that this game suggests for all-out multiplayer hate fests are astounding. I never thought anything would be more satisfying than demoushing someone's wonder with trebuchets in AGE OF KINGS, but then again I've never driven down the property value of someone's tony shopping district with a row of sleazy pool halls and dingy bars right across the street. Or surrounded their exclusive highrise, high-rent apartment complex with low rent, clapboard crack houses. But I want to real bad

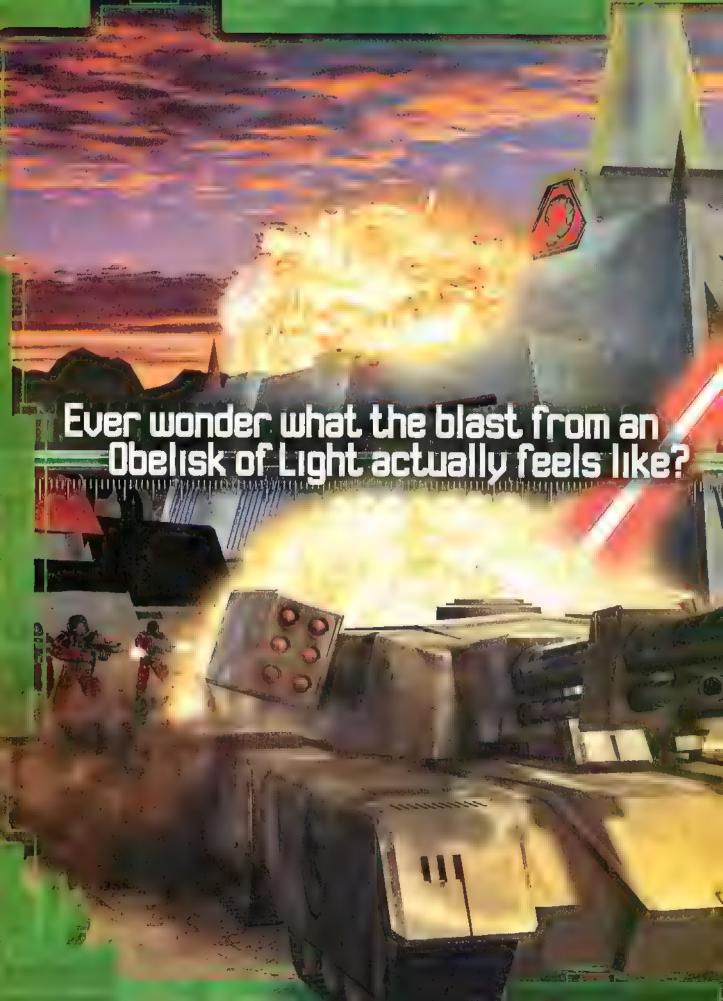
I just hope no one throws their computer across the office.  $\begin{tabular}{ll} \hline \end{tabular}$ 

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By Jeff Green

That will Blizzard do next?" It's a question we love to ask those of us who have become enslaved by their addictive games and one we always get wrong.

So when Blizzard announced that they were going to reveal their next project this September, the speculation ran rampant as usual; as fanboys and industry dorks alike started guessing at the possibilities. STARCRAFT 27 Massively multiplayer DIABLO? A first-person shooter? The answer was finally revealed or September 2 at ECTS in London—and, as usual, everyone was wrong again.

Coming next from Bilizzard is WORLD OF WARCRAFT, a massively multiplayer RPG set in the WARCRAFT universe. And although no one expected this, it is as exciting an announcement as they could have made. Finally, Blizzard is ewooping down from that leads are view and letting us play inside one of their fantasy universes. Finally, instead of commanding troops from above, we get to be mighty heroes ourselves, creating our own personal legends.

it is:Blizzard's most ambitious game to date—and over me next 110 pages, the green-skinned CGW peons are ready to take you on a rour of the now-living kinggiom of Axeron 10 the exclusive first look. Zug zug



Feature: World of WarCraft



will introduce a third race for player characters: the Tauren, huge creatures who live in a peaceful, tribal society. They are a wise, nomadic race, who ally with the Orcs in WARCRAFT III because they identify with the Orc struggle to retain their traditions and identity. The Tauren live in the grassy lands of central Kalimdor; their only natural enemies are the brutal cen-

In WARCRAFT III Blizzard

taurs of Kalimdor, who have raided Tauren villages for genera-



s any serious WARCRAFT geck knows, Blizzard has long had a huge story in place for its flagship universe-but most of that story never appeared in the games themselves. But the WARCRAFT | and Il designers were obviously frustrated storyteilers, because they packed the manuals and subsequent novels with details of a deeply thought-out fantasy world (somewhat reminiscent of Raymond Feist's great Riftwar Saga) that has just begged for further enrichment. Blizzard tried to build on the story in the never-released WARCRAFT ADVENTURES, and the fact that they're coming back to it again-this time in an online RPG-just proves the level of their obses-

"The simple fact is that WARCRAFT is our flagship gig," said Chris Metzen, longtime Blizzard veteran and "keeper of the arcane flame" of all WARCRAFT continuity. "DIABLO kicks ass, STARCRAFT kicks ass—I'm partial



OF WARCRAFT may represent a quantum leap in ambition, scope, and technology over anything they've done previously, at root, this is still going to be a Blizzard game—with all the simplicity, ease-of-use, and—in theory—fun that that implies.

#### AT YOUR SERVICE

From the moment you launch WORLD OF WARCRAFT, Blizzard aims to make the

"Dude, how cool would it be to be in this world, to be those heroes?"

to all of them. But ultimately, we were like, f\*\*k it, this is it—the WARCRAFT universe is Blizzard. There wasn't much to think about. It was a perfect fit for this kind of game.

And while it may seem odd for Blizzard to be announcing another new WARCRAFT game while they're still struggling to finish WARCRAFT III (now bumped to 2002), the fact is, WORLD OF WARCRAFT has been in development for a year already, with a team of nearly 40 people working on it full time. When we flew down to check out the game in mid-August, the team demo'ed it live, on a running server, with other Blizzard employees for a full hour

And the great news is that while WORLD

experience as simple as in all of their other games. Like all MMORPGS, you'll start out by creating your character. At this point B izzard is announcing only three of the player races: Human, Orc, and Tauren. The first two we all know about, while the latter is a race being introduced in WARCRAFT III (see sidebar).

Players will have a healthy number of options for making their characters stand out physically, because the team realizes that in MMORPGS, as in real life, looks do matter. As such, Blizzard is including loads of options for character creation, including numerous facial choices, hair for, in the Taurens' case, horn) styles, skin colors, and



even tattoos. Armor and weaponry will be huge, of course, and (as in DIASLO) the acquisition and wearing of unique, bad-ass items will be key to making your character stand out. Bizzard won't reveal character classes yet, except to say that they'll fit into the WARCRAFT universe-so you can at least expect the standard mix of warriors, spellcasters, and rangers-and you can look to the WARCRAFT II (and III, when it ships) manuals for further ideas.

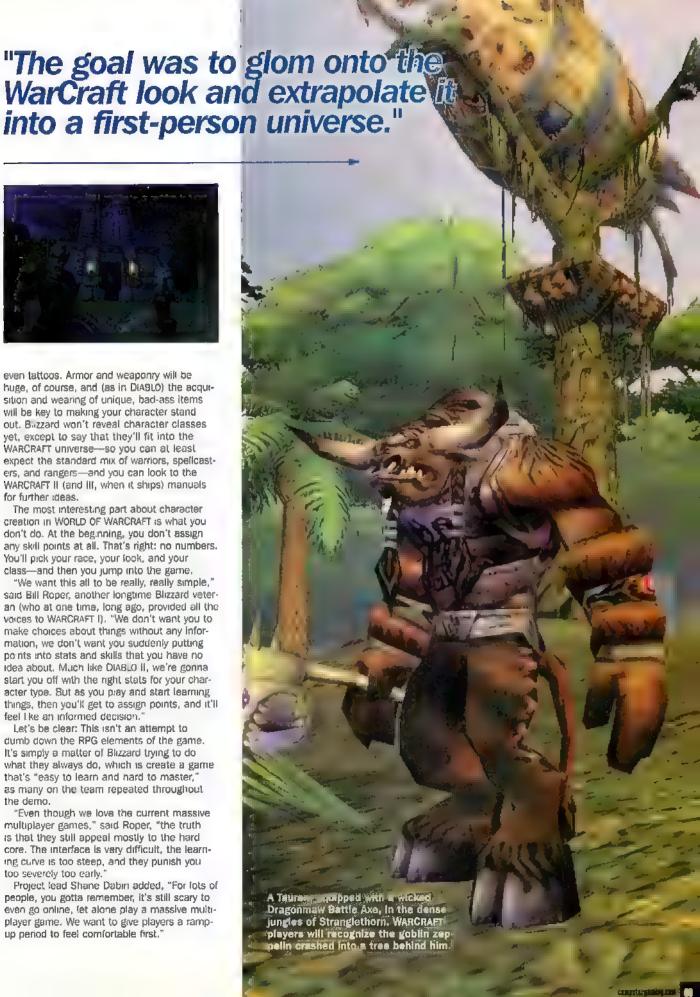
The most interesting part about character creation in WORLD OF WARCRAFT is what you don't do. At the beginning, you don't assign any skill points at all. That's right: no numbers. You'll pick your race, your look, and your class-and then you jump into the game.

"We want this all to be really, really simple," said Bill Roper, another longtime Blizzard veteran (who at one time, long ago, provided all the voices to WARCRAFT I). "We don't want you to make choices about things without any information, we don't want you suddenly putting points into stats and skills that you have no idea about, Much like DIABLO II, we're gonna start you off with the right stats for your character type. But as you play and start learning things, then you'll get to assign points, and it'll feel like an informed decision."

Let's be clear: This isn't an attempt to dumb down the RPG elements of the game. It's simply a matter of Blizzard trying to do what they always do, which is create a game that's "easy to learn and hard to master," as many on the team repeated throughout the demo.

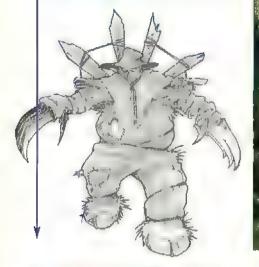
"Even though we love the current massive multiplayer games," said Roper, "the truth is that they still appeal mostly to the hard core. The interface is very difficult, the learning curve is too steep, and they punish you too severely too early.

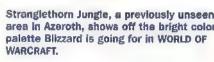
Project lead Shane Dabin added, "For lots of people, you gotta remember, it's still scary to even go online, let alone play a massive multiplayer game. We want to give players a rampup period to feel comfortable first."



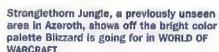
Feature: World of WarCraft

# Enemy Harvest Golem





The large green fellow on the left is not mere shrubbery. He's a bad-ass monster called a treant, and he was the "and boss" of a multi-part quest. The treant shakes the player's screen slightly when he's nearby, and shakes it a lot when you kill





Once you create your character and enter Azeroth, it becomes clear just how serious

Bizzard is. The team has created a brandnew 3D engine for the game, which you can view from a first- or thirdperson perspective (easily

> switchable with the mouse wheel), and it is a marvel. Unlike nearly every other massively multiplayer game around, WORLD OF WARCRAFT IS not going for a "photorealistic" look with lots of earth tones. It is instead opting for a more

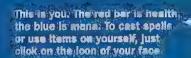
surreal and colorful look that is faithful to the WARCRAFT palette, and that feels, as Roper put it, "almost like you're inside a painting."

For Metzen, this look was crucial, "It was a very specific goal for us, to glom onto the WARCRAFT look and try to extrapo ate it into a first-person universe. We were looking for something more toonic; we wanted a level of mightiness not found in other games. And that's what this game is about: mighty dudes doing great deeds."

To give the world a "five" feel, the team has added large environmental effects like moving water and skies, along with more subtle effects like swaying cobwebs and flying butterflies and birds. More important, all the monsters and NPCs in the gameworld are always doing something. NPCs don't stand around waiting for you to come to them; they have assignments, such as patrolling, guarding, or hunting. You may even see a line of peons chopping wood.

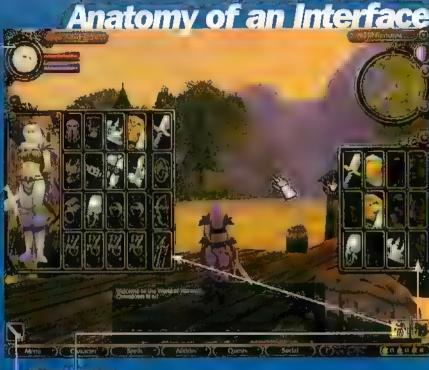
You traverse the world mostly on foot at first, though higher-level characters will gain tems like teleport scrolls. The world is going to be huge, encompassing at least a good portion of Azeroth as depicted in the WARCRAFT II manual, along with new areas depicted in WARCRAFT III-though Blizzard declined to be more specific on this point.

Perhaps the coolest element of traveland a feature that all veteran massively mult player gamers are going to shout out loud about---is that there are no load times between zones. The world is streaming, as in DIABLO II, so that you actually experience a smooth transition as you move from one environment to the next, with no load screen whatsoever. We actually saw this work, so unless Blizzard was using





You can drag spells and Items into the Action List at the lower left of the screen for quick access.





The cursor is contextsensitive. For example, when you drag it over a monster, it turns into a sword. Once you've killed the monster, the oursor turns into a gauntiet holding a bag, indicating you can now loot the corpse.



Your "paper doil" and backpack Icons appear in the lower right. You can rightclick on items to drop. them immediately into your backpack. When you pick up armor, it automatically fits itself to the proper slot on your body.



Your current location.

The game's day/night cycle. You can mouse over it to get the exact gameworld time.

As you locate places in the world, they're added to your minimap. You can zoom the map in and out.

smoke and mirrors to fool us, they've already solved a major MMORPG headache. In addition, every player will have the ability to bind to a location via huge binding stones scattered throughout the world-so you won't have to beg another player to do it for you.

wait an hour to lure one creature out and then spend 10 minutes trying to kill him. ("We don't feel like you should be reading a book or doing your laundry during combat," said Roper.)

Death is going to be made somewhat less painful than in the current crop of MMORPGs. "We want it to be not terribly

# "We've learned a lot from battle.net over the years, both good and bad. Hopefully we can use that knowledge here . . ."

#### BY YOUR COMMAND

So what, exactly, are you going to be doing in WORLD OF WARCRAFT? Combat, obviously, will play a huge role. (Yes, there will be player-versus-player-and yes, you can avoid it if you want.) Blizzard is promising, however, that battles will happen faster and more often than is typical of the genre. It won't be quite as frenetic as DIABLO II, but on the other hand, you won't have to

jaming," said Dabiri, "You've gotta be sorry when you die, but you shouldn't feel like you just got punched in the stomach and want to go cry for a week. You've got to want to jump right back in and try to do better, rather than shut the computer off and think 'the game screwed me.'"

Blizzard is also stressing, however, that players will be able to gain experience from activities other than combat, such



as going on quests, practicing trade skills, helping other players, and maybe even just exploring. Quests will range from easy, solo missions that you can do in one or two hours, to large-scale quests that may involve many players roaming all over the world for weeks.

Blizzard demonstrated a sample quest for us, a multipart one that required us to travel to different locations. The original quest, given to us by an NPC, is to destroy a strange tree beast that attacks folks out in a jungle. On our way, we discover that we need a specific weapon, a flaming blade called the Firestar, to defeat him, but that

# Swingers



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# Swingers



hot new characters like the buxom Blonde Bombshell or the virile Jock. Set the mood with romantic new objects like the Cuddle Couch or the Love Tub. Then make your move by blowing kisses, playing footsie or playing hard to get. You might just get lucky. Or you may just get a drink in the face. But it's not a hot date until you turn up the heat.



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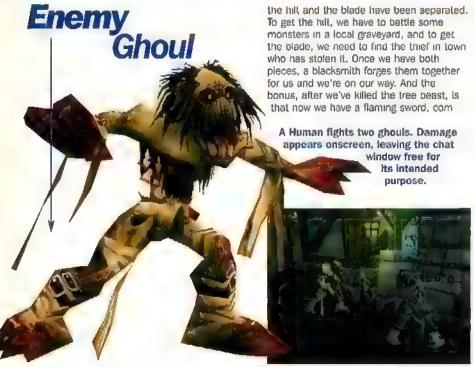


Create and share missions with the built-in Mission Editor and wage war online in multiplayer action via LAN or Internet.









plete with particle effects, that we can show off to other players in the world.

#### FOR THE ALLIANCE

Of course, the game is really all about other players. Blizzard is focusing much attention on developing rewards for participating in the community and working with others.

One exciting concept they're introducing is that of ritual magic—spells that will require multiple casters to use. The example they demonstrated for us was a ritual spell that opens a portal to a special zone. To do this, we needed multiple casters because different players possessed different spells that all needed to be cast together. The reward for participating in such a ritual is that all the casters can then travel through the portal, but access is barred to anyone else. So if you're one of the few people in the world who can do certain ritual magic spells, everyone will know it, and you're going to be a popular player.

Another good reason to group with others is that every character class will come with an innate passive ability. When you join a group, that ability is shared automatically with everyone in the group. For example, a ranger's ability may be that his minimap is

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Tauren and Human players band together to fight gnolls near the Duskwood border. This bridge will actually take you to another zone, but, unlike other MMORPGS we've seen, you'll get there without a load screen.

filled in with more detail than maps of other classes. If you group with a ranger, you will receive that bonus, as long as you stay with him. Because different races will have different classes, this will also

how you conduct yourself, of course, will also affect how the other denizens of Azeroth respond to you.

#### MORE WORK

It all sounds good now, in theory. But will Blizzard really be able to pull this off, avoiding all the technical problems that have plagued nearly every other game of this type? So far, they remain confident.

"We've learned a lot from battle.net over the years, both good and bad," said Roper. "it's still the largest online multiplayer game service, so we have lots to draw upon.

Two Humans and an Orc standing around looking cool in Goldshire. Orc. and Human players will be able to play together-but you'll have to work on that relationship to make it happen.

Duskwood is the creepy forest to the south of the Human capital. Blizzard is hoping to make each area completely distinct, with a graphical look that puts you "inside of a painting."

# "We don't feel like you should be reading a book or doing laundry during combat."

encourage players of different races to band together

Ores and Humans, banding together? We're not sure. And Blizzard isn't telling. WORLD OF WARCRAFT actually takes place about five years after the conclusion of WARCRAFT III and whether these mortal enemies can now live in peace is a plot spoiler that Blizzard will not yet reveal. Differences in faction definitely will be a part of the game, however, and

Obviously we're not going to be running because it's a completely different paradigm. But we can utilize the full breadth and scope of our knowledge on getting hundreds of thousands of people online playing with each other ready simply."

Blizzard will be setting up multiple realms on servers around the world for WORLD OF WARCRAFT, and the company plans to maintain a full time staff with the sole

WORLD OF WARCRAFT on DIABLO II realms,

#### PARTOPS NORTO

When the WORLD OF WARCRAFT team first started the project, they got together and talked about all the things they don't like in other MMORPGs. The result? You won't see any of those things in their game. Or at least that's what they're say ing now. Here's what Bilzzard is promising you won't see in WORLD OF WARCRAFT

- Load times between zones
- The need to camp for crucial monsters
- Too much downtime between battles:
  - Food and drink needed to stay alive (though these things can help heat you you're found)
- Rats or rabbits to kill (Bill Roper: Fleeing with my mighty dwarven warrior toward a guard to save me from a rat. that doesn't make me feel real epig and mighty.")







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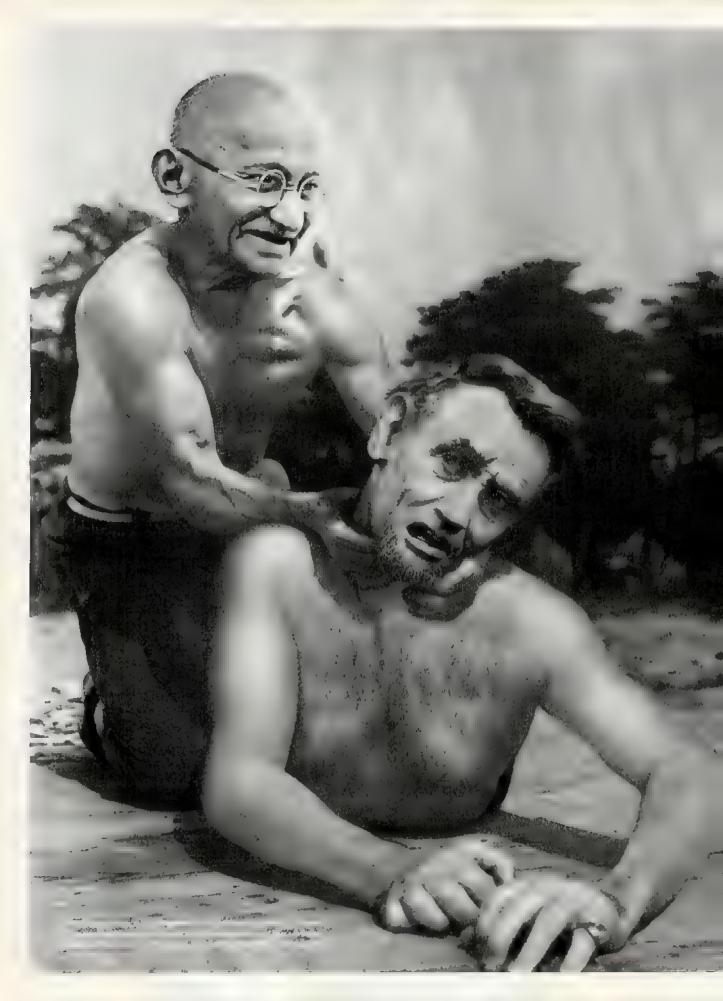






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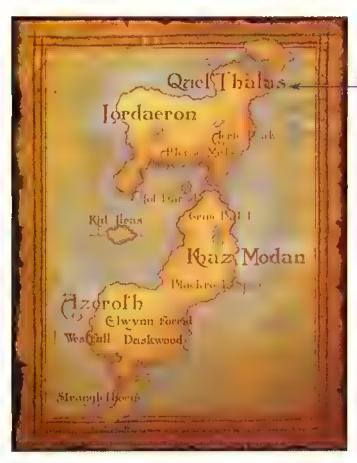






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Feature: World of WarCraft



Azeroth

Here's Blizzard's latest version of their fantasy world of Azeroth. They're basing the geographical layout on the maps from the strategy games, but are adding areas, like Stranglethorn, that we've never seen before.

responsibility of continuing to create new content for the game. "We think of it as an

amusement park motif," said Metzen, "We

want you to keep coming back again and

job will be to keep the lines short and keep chang ing up the rides."

Human

**Footman** 

Bizzard is also promising to conduct extensive beta testing and swears they're going to take their time with it. "The beta test is actually the big x-factor here," said Roper. "We can't tell you if it's going to be one month or one year. We put the biggest pressure on ourselves. If a game ships on time, but it doesn't work and it's not fun, then who cares? We've always fell it's much more important to get a game right when it comes out, so that four years later people are still playing it because it's a good game."

So what does that mean for a release date? It means, unfortunately, that there isn't one. "No matter what date we tell you, you're not gonna believe us," said Roper. "So we don't have a release date."

And that was the only lousy thing we'd heard all day.

#### FOR THE KING

With WORLD OF WARCRAFT, Blizzard is veering away from familiar terrain and entering an extremely competitive gaming landscape fraught with hazards—as the frazzled teams of EVERQUEST, ANARCHY ONLINE, WORLD WAR II ONLINE, and others would all attest. But it's a challenge that clearly has Blizzard jazzed.

"Huge communities have always built up

A human character casts Word of Recall to return to his bind point. All characters will be able to bind themselves to a region—you won't have to seek someone's help to do it.





Feature: World of WarCraft

Sunset over the Swamp of Sorrows, near the Orcs' Dark Portal.

around our games, from WARCRAFT II on." said Roper. "Every time we come up with a new product, we work on how we can better integrate the community and get people to interact. So a massive multiplayer game is just the next logical step. What's really exciting to us is sitting around and taking about a game that won't have a chat room.



You'll now finally be talking to other players as your character, all the time. It's exciting to us as developers and gamers."

And that last part is why Blizzard always gets it right: At root, they are just geeky gamers like the rest of us. They're making WORLD OF WARCRAFT because this is the game that they want to play.

"There is so much to this universe," said Dabin, "so much we want to explore. All we could think as we started this project was,



Orcs versus Humans in the Iron Forge mountains.

dude, how cool would it be to be in that world, to be those heroes, and adventure in the places we fought all those massive battles in?"

Dude, we couldn't agree more. So hurry up, finish WARCRAFT III already, and let us into the world. The kingdom of Azeroth needs heroes like us. (CCT)

### WarGraft III Undate



he way we see it, the biggest obstacle standing between us and hundreds of nours lost playing World of Warchaffish't the technology or the design or a rigorous beta test: It's that damn Warchaff III. During our visit, Blizzard kept vowing that the incredible amount of new gameworld content in WC3 will have a huge Impact on the eventual state of World Of Warchaff. So how long until we can see that 200-percent increase in content and start

speculating about its expression in WORLD?

Well, not until spring of 2002. The good news is that Blizzard has nailed down the design and most of the units. The final unit mix will be determined by the vigorous play-balancing yet to come (an internal bata should be underway by the time you read this). The design team is overhauling the art for all the races, adding new low-polymodels to ensure every unit looks great even on lower-end machines.



They're tweaking the tech tree for all four playable races, which has led to the welcome return of the gryphon aviary for the Humans. Lumber harvesting has been added to the game to create more of a classic WC2 feel, though the harvesting is performed: at a slower rate and should prevent players from hacking down entire forest walls. Additionally, a great dealof effort is going into finalizing the effects of the cycling of day and night-specifically how daylight or the lack thereof affects fog of war, tine of sight, and the special abilities of certain races. Oh, and there's that little matter of actually creating a single-player campaign, Fortunately, the story line is pretty well set and the multiplayer testing has led to the prototyping of a variety of mission types.

What we saw looks good. From the thoughtful interface tweaks to the mobile Night Elf buildings to the devastating assortment of boss-caliber dragons, WARCRAFT III looks to be well on its way to delivering a great gaming experience, if not an imminent one. —Robert Coffey

Annual management and a second

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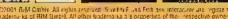
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## **Nothing Left to Say**

anything-to-write-about-so-l'm-going-towrite-700-words-about-how-l-have-noth-ing-to-say columns that every writer seems to crank out at least once in their career [or if you're Jeff Green, on a monthly basisl. That's not the problem. The problem is, this is the last reviews opener as you've come to know and love them and I can't figure out how to say goodbye.

Quit yer cryln'-l'm not going anywhere, I'll still be here cranking out halfassed, know-nothing reviews like my sublime TRIBES 2 piece and doing all my regular duties at the magazine. You know-writing, editing, occasionally giving Robert Coffey a "how's your father?" with a cattle prod (he begs me). But the plan for the impending redesign calls for some changes in this space as well as the rest of the reviews section,

For instance, say goodbye to the little pictures representing the star rating system. Oh, we'll still give you a humoroustheme for the ratings scale, but from now... on it will be done with text. Actually, this opens up a whole new world of possibili-ties when it comes time to think those blasted things up. Our first list could be four-letter words or completely innocuous phrases that sound dirty when transtated into French. For our last list we decided to go with recent CGW covers. More than one reader wrote in and suggested we put CGW editors in that slot,

No, this isn't one of those I-can't-think-of- but we didn't want to hurt anyone's feetings, you're looking for. You'll see, it'll be great; Specifically, Jeff's.

> reviewing, or moving toward the brevity: of Entertainment Weekly. We're simply putting together a section that makes you flipping straight to the specific review; always have Paris. -- Tom Price.

I'm bad at goodbyes, so let's not say that: And the reviews themselves are going to instead, I've got a few parting shots: To look quite different as well. Don't worry, severyone who's ever been pissed off at a we're not changing our theories on game: review I wrote-and subsequently emailed everyone on the masthead with actwothousand word diatribe about why I'm "hella: tame": Bite me. To Jeff: Whoops, halready want to read every page instead of just took my shots at you. To the gnome: We'll

#### MOVEMBER REVIEWS

BAME	RATING SALES
Anarchy Online	<b>大大大大</b>
Combat Command 2: Desert Rats	黄素大大大
Cultures	
Dark Orbit	2) 。 <b>法</b> * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
Decisive Action	****
Divided Ground	****
Empire of the Ants	20 法大大大大
Eurofighter Typhoen	<b>决条水大大</b>
Green Berets	美术大会大
Legends of Might and Magic	<b>大大大大大</b>
Max Payne	<b>,由古古古大</b> 儿
Mega Man Legends	
Poseidon: Zeus Official Expansion	***
Rules of the Game	****
Settlers IV	<b>大大意大大</b>
Starfleet Command 2: Orion Pirates	****
Squad Battles: Vietnam	****

#### HOW DO WE RATE? We review only finished games — no betas, no patches



game that gots it all right. A must-play experience.



Westky of your time and money, but there are drawbacks.



Either an ambitious design with major flaws, or just vanilla,



K Seriously locking in play value, poorly conceived, or just another close,



L'The rare game: that gets it all wrong. Pathetic. Cascter material



The gaming world's first mindless blockbuster

# **Ecstasy in Slow Motion**

he moment—the one where a game does something to make you laugh darkly under your breath, feel the rush of exhilaration, and utter your best Keanu-esque "whoa"—came for me in one of the early levels of MAX PAYNE. I was heading up a stairwell when I caught the flash of legs running away down the hall. I positioned myself and activated bullet-time, as I was growing accustomed to doing whenever I knew trouble was just around the corner. As I vaulted in slo-mo up the stairs, a grenade floated gently by my face, on its way through a graceful arc toward my feet where it would detonate and tear me to shreds. Yet in that long, pregnant moment as I watched my

> fate unfold, I had to laugh. Not only did that scripted sonofabitch ice me, he tricked me into slowing down my own death, as if he were giving me a chance to watch my life flash before my eyes. Now that's dramatic tension

MAX PAYNE is like a big summer blockbuster movie. You don't go to see those movies for intricacies of plot, deep character development, or dialogue that would make the

Bard weep. No, you see them for the special effects. And when it comes to special effects, MAX PAYNE sports some of the most mouth-watering eye candy ever seen in a computer game. And when it comes to story, MAX PAYNE is as poorly written and acted as any piece of Van Damme/Seagal/Lundgren (as in Dolph) trash you've wasted eight bucks on at the multiplex. So why is it still so much damn fun?

Well, as I said, the special effects are really something to behold. Remedy's 3D engine does an amazingly effective job of rendering a world that not only looks photorealistic at times but also evokes the grittiness of a noir action-thriller on the big screen. Run-down inner-city resident hotels, filthy industrial areas, and beer-and-vomit-soaked nightclubs are all brought to life by rich textures and moody lighting. These highly detailed and rarely repeated textures add to the realism, as do the countless objects lying around. Syringes, mysteriously stained furniture, bottles—hell, even the crates are believable. The extreme detail of the worlds, even the cleaner environments you encounter later on, really help in the suspension of disbelief. In addition, the models of the characters you encounter (as well as the model of Max) are full of details and come in various sizes and shapes.



Regultements: Pentium II 450, 96MB RAM, 800MB hard drive space, 16MB D3D video card #ecommensed Regultements: Pentium III 700, 128MB RAM, 32MB D3D video eard 39 Support: D3D Moltiplayer: None

Publisher: EGodGemes • Developer: Remedy/3DRevims • \$46 • www.maxpayne.com ESRS Rating: Mature; violence, blood, dead habies, sexual situations



A burning ring of fire is your main opponent in this level, where you must escape the trap of a burning building. Levels in MAX PAYNE ofter various objectives other than blasting away at everything that moves, and there are some truly bizarre dream sequences.

Of course, the special effects that you notice the most are those for the weapons, and they are easily the most dazzling ever seen in any game. Sometimes it's worth it to turn on bullet-time just for the sake of watching the tongues of flame squirt out of gun barrels and to see each projectile rendered down to its copper jacketing or barrel marks.

But that script. Yeesh! It's not so much that the story is trite or hackneyed—lots of great books and movies are built on the same old plot foundationsit's the way it's told that shows a serious lack of writing talent. If you don't know already, MAX PAYNE is the story of an NYPD detective out for revenge after his wife and infant child are slain by "killer junkles" He goes deep undercover in the DEA to find out who is behind this new designer drug "valkyr." The game follows him through the same plot twists we've seen in every game or movie (warning; spoilers ahead). His partner is killed, and quess who gets blamed? He catches up with the guy he thinks is responsible for the drug epidemic, only to unlock a greater conspiracy involving the government, yada yada yada. The ending-while cool from a gameplay standpoint—is extremely disappointing in being so predictable, especially since intricate plot twists are hinted at throughout the game but never expanded (End spoilers.)

The writing, obviously going for an over-the-top noir style, like Dashiell Hammett fused with Irvine Welsh, is laughably ridiculous. Here are some choice examples: "The sun went down with practiced bravado . . . " " . . . sirens singing in the off-key harmony of a manic-depressive choir." "Snow fell like confetti over the devil's parade."

Most of this embarrassing dialogue is presented in a serious-sounding voice-over during the graphic novel-inspired cut-scenes. The graphic novel idea is a good one, but it could have been improved in two ways. One: Cut the voice-over It's like listening to comic books on tape. Two: Instead of using photos of real people in the panels, just hire an artist to create a genuine graphic novel. The "actors" don't fit their parts well at all anyway. The guy playing Max is some skinny little runt, and the so-called killer junkies look like they work in Reinedy's accounting department.

Dreams can turn Into nightmares especially when you involve Satanists and dead babies

Oh, and get a real noir writer to create the dialogue. For some reason, every amateur writer thinks they can write good noir, but they can't. Here's a quarter, cail James Elroy.

Yet the hammy writing still couldn't ruin MAX PAYNE for me. The action was too hot, the slo-mo bullet time too cool. It really never got old. The fact that the game took me only about 12 hours to finish wasn't a drawback either. The developers included gameplay modes, Hard-Boiled and New York Minute, that significantly add to the game's value. No, there's no multiplayer mode, but for a very good reason: It wouldn't work.

Because MAX PAYNE strives to offer a cinematic experience, it's only fair to judge it by the same standards I would judge a movie. Whenever I see a movie, I ask myself. Would I see it again? Would I recommend it to friends? Did I waste my money? The answers are yes, yes, and no. MAX PAYNE is no Citizen Kane, but then again I've watched Death Wish 4: The Crackdown more times than any of Orson Welles' movies combined. What can I say, I like guilty pleasures. [551]



Telling a story through graphic novel sequences is inspired, but pext time leave the real-life actors at home.



Spray-and-pray strategies are much more effective when bullettime is in effect.

review



#### Of course it's broken, but it'll be great. We hope.

## fun Bomb

began installing Anarchy Online one sunny morning at about 10:00. I finished the next day around noon. It took me a dozen reinstallations, multiple patch downloads (many of which failed). and other system contortions to even get up to a registration screen, and when I did get a chance to register a new account, the servers were down. To convince me of its all-consuming wonderfulness after all that, ANARCHY ONLINE would have to cook a meal, fetch my slippers, and crap gold doubloons.

Even Norwegians can't squeeze all that into a box for \$12.95 a month. And, truth be told, AO didn't

work all that well once I got inside. But it was clear after only a few hours spent creating characters and fiddling with play mechanics that Funcom has the chance to move massively multiplayer role-playing into a new realm. That is, if they can make it work. This game has the stuff of greatness in it, but it's buried beneath serious problems.

AO is most like EVERQUEST in the way it matches a dazzling array of careers, skills, and stats to a potentially strong questing and narrative element. Like EQ, the world is vivid and well conceived, adding substantially to the roleplaying and career-building expenence essential to a good MMORPG.

Where EQ felt like work, with a forbidding interface and a steep learning curve, AO is inviting. It streamlines interactions and offers a more enticing experience/rewards system. It feels like a complete, hying environment, where people can gather, team up. swear, trade, dance, and more.

Funcom accomplishes this in various ways. Most obvious is the brilliantly crafted gameworld. The city and countryside exteriors are beautiful, with diverse architecture, believable weather effects, and a sky that convincingly cycles from day to night. Interiors are less effective, particularly for missions in caves and other natural environments

But beyond the visuals lies AO's real strength: the planet of Rubi-Ka. In a departure from the conventional quasi-medieval/fantasy settings of the other MMORPGs, Funcom offers a futuristic world. Rubi-Ka's narrative involves warring factions 30,000 years in the future, with megacorporation Omni-Tek fending off rebel clans. As you cross the expansive landscape, you get a sense that this is a real world. Regions flow smoothly into each other, with minimal load times. Exploration of the wild landscape reveals caves, small towns, forts, castles, and several cities. One abandoned fortress-town is under constant bombardment, which shakes the ground. Craters pock the landscape and twisted ruins line the streets. In the distance, you can watch the town's massive cannons exchange fire with some distant enemy. Touches such as thus permeate Rubi Ka and make it a place you want to return to.

A SECTION PROS A deep role-playing experience with a fantastic array of character types. stats, and skills. A complex, vivid world brought to life with fine visual fiair. X I Rollout plaqued by bugs and server errors, including broken missions, broken combat. persistent memory leaks, and frame-

rate problems.

Regulrements: Pentium II 300, 64MB RAM, 700MB hard drive space, 8MB 3D graphics card, Internet connection, 28.8 modern Accommended Regularments, Pentium 1)1 450, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card, 1GB hard drive space, cable or OSL modern 3D Support: Direct3D Multiplayer: Massively multiplayer

Publisher: Funcom • Devoleper: Funcom •\$49.99, \$12.95 per menth subscription fee • www.anarchy-online.com ESRB Reting: Teen; blood and violence



THE LEGACY OF

A CAME DESIGNED BY EXECUTE

A CAME DESIGNED BY EXECUTE

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Visually, caves may not look much better than a three-year-old RPG, but they give you plenty of apportunities to gain experience.

The sci-fi setting is largely confined to the lingo and visuals, with plenty of tech-talk and ersatz-Biade Runner clothing. There's no space travel and vehicles are rare and expensive, making it a fantasy-style game with futuristic trappings. The game mechanics are familiar, with nanotechnology assuming the role of magic and "nano-energy" taking the place of mana. But within this format, AO manages to create a unique experience in which people improve their characters through an impressive array of performance-enhancing implants and "nanoclusters."

The interface is one area where AO really stands out. A lot of information can be onscreen at once without looking busy. Interactions get complex, so you'll appreciate the ability to drag and drop weapons, objects, and individual skills and attack types to a small, floating interface bar. You can create and save elaborate custom action strings

They may call everything

"nano" this and that in

AO, but it all looks and

functions a lot like con-

ventional magic.

and add them as macro buttons for use during gameplay. These let you perform several actions in a row, such as sit, select yourself. heal, use nanotechnology, stand, and attack.

Missions remain, at press time, a frustrating weak link. You can take on solo or team missions, with rewards doled out as experience points, credits, and items. Many missions are glorified dungeon crawls in which you make your way through a limited environment, clearing out enemies and performing rudimentary tasks. Missions with complex goals are avail able but most have a similar seek-and-destroy



Crossroads are good gathering places where you can rest, get some food, and form parties.

feel. Even good missions often don't work, either failing to give you credit, disappearing from your mission list before the time limit expires, or simply crashing on completion Locked doors will prove frustrating, leading to dead ends for anyone who forgets to buy a lockpick kit and enhance the Breaking and Entering skill.

Combat is another horribly broken aspect with real potential. The complex interactions among skills, nanotechnology, implants, weapons, training, race, and career make for a sophisticated and highly customizable combat expenence. There is a wide selection of weapons and attack types, ranging from firearms and hand-to-hand combat to nanotech, with each character offering a unique combatexperience. Engineers unpack little androids to fight for them. Agents strike quickly and move away, Meta-Physicists summon mystical creatures and can positively or negatively affect the stats of others. You can swap out weapons and create multifaceted attacks, effectively mixing nanotech, hand-to-hand, and weapons. But you can still fire through walls, even from two and three rooms away. The role of dodging and evasion is unclear. I've been hit around corners, while moving away, and from the far side of a large room by a close-quarters attack such as Brawl. It's reasonable to expect that no one should be able to land a roundhouse punch from 40 feet away.

Although CGW has a strict policy of reviewing only the released, unpatched code, this is simply impossible with an MMORPG. Patching is mandatory as part of the login process. As released, AO features the bugs discussed so far plus horrendous lag, a crippling memory leak, thousands of broken CD keys, and unsecured registration. Frame-rates slower than 1 frame-per-second and minor warping were common. As we go to press, Funcom is up to version 12.4. Almost two months after release, the patching has helped improved and stabilize ANARCHY ONLINE, though breaking other things in the process. The

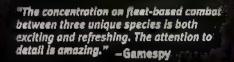
> latest patch did improve my frame-rates and reduce lag, allowing me to improve performance by making other gamers invisible—of course, this moots the point of an online RPG. Vexing crashes persist, and exploitable holes allow people to cheat their characters up to ridiculous levels. Worse, 12.4 introduced a stack overflow that was crashing the program after only 10 minutes of game time.

While Funcom was still working to solve these problems, they made the huge PR blunder of starting the clock on the free first month. The game was so far from stable at that point that gamers balked at having to pay for beta-testing it. Whether people will stick with it and grow the community remains to be seen, but the game appears to be on its way to being stable and playable. Broken combat, mission bugs, and memory leaks remain formidable challenges and are still preventing many from fully enjoying the game. Some of these problems—particularly the memory leaks—are inexcusable.

Even with all these problems, there is a lot that works in AO. Unlike the equally troubled WORLD WAR II ONLINE, AO has all of its features in place and has a strong design. The world is large and rich, and the different careers and skills, various regions, and hostilities among Omni-Tek and the clans will make for a deep role-playing experience. A four-year narrative arc is already planned. When it becomes fully functional, ANARCHY ONLINE will be the MMORPG by which others are measured. CTI

# CONQUEST

<u>Ingramfulton and olomanlang and thola</u>





BARTLE MAPS



Primite lize porth year southing land Management System



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"Definitely a MUSt" for anyone into the RTS scene".

-IGN



Mild Violence





Actual Screen Shots ~

SETTLERS IV and CULTURES go precisely where you've gone

# Déjà Vu All Over Again

ome things travel in pairs, like Laurel and Hardy, Ben and Jerry, and those parts of Pamela Anderson that always enter a room first.

Sometimes games arrive in pairs, too, such as SETTLERS IV from Blue Byte and CULTURES from Funatics. These games couldn't be more alike in most ways and both are afflicted by the same curse: They require far too much micromanagement!

CULTURES and SETTLERS IV are building games. If you're unfamiliar with the SETTLERS series, of which CULTURES is obviously a copy, the objective is to create a settlement and nurture your village into a thriving colony all the while balancing resources and building interdepen-

SETTLERS IV AND eviewed by Mark Asker dencies. In other words, you're required to do a lot of continuous knobtwisting and buttonpushing. You could call these god games if you like, but it's God as an accountant first and itinerant tinker second

In CULTURES you manage a band of Vikings who have arrived on distant shores. You help them build their village, assigning individual Vikings different jobs. Some scenarios in the campaign require you to do battle with rival groups, including Eskimos, Indians, and Mayans; some groups offer noncombat solutions.

In SETTLERS IV you play as Romans, Mayans, or Vikings The new unplayable race is the Dark Tribe. The building process here is more complex than that of CULTURES, as each building is dependent on others. It's the same town building system that's been used in the previous SETTLERS games, so series veterans will be at ease but probably bored with it.

It's not the basic gameplay that's the problem in these

games. What drags them down is that SETTLERS IV GULTURES you have to play through campaigns that pile on Nice arach-Offers more multiple sceics and personal narios that gameplay touches differ in that than only minor SETTLERS. SETTLEAR ways. The tan love. tech trees are

You've played both these games before, and they still require too much micromanagement.

fully unlocked in these games from the start, so you'll find yourself build ing the same buildings over and over again in each scenario. It's like driving through Kansas: "Look, kids, more wheat fields!"

In fact, the best scenarios are the open-ended standalone ones-vou just build and fiddle to your

well-balanced village



SETTLERS IV



CULTURES

From humble beginnings do mighty civilizations grow in both of these games. SETTLERS IV just does it better, and it's prettier.

heart's content. The pace is more relaxed and you get to do what you buy these games for in the first place: build up a community of little people and a well-run.

There is one key area where these very similar games diverge. In CULTURES, you get a much more personal relationship with your Vikings, almost a SIMS-like one. They have names, you tell them when to get married and when to have kids, you pick the sex of the child, and so on. This comes with a price—lots of micromanagement. SETTLERS IV. though also heavy in micromanagement, isn't as bad as CULTURES, Score one for SETTLERS.

SETTLERS IV eschews these personal touches but has its own bent. Although it's a builder, it's also a game that requires military conquest to complete scenarios. You always have to eradicate a rival race, so your building is geared toward creating an army. In CULTURES, going to war is only one of the ways to complete some of the scenarios. The result is a slightly more relaxed gaming expenence. Score one for CULTURES

Maybe the biggest difference between these games is in the glitz Both are certainly full of 2D visual appeal, but SETTLERS does more with cut-scenes and the graphics are generally better.

In the end both are pleasant enough gaming experiences if you don't mind the micromanagement. Not much is new in either game, but not much strays from what makes such games popular in the first place. Here's your best weathervane: If you liked the previous SETTLERS games, both of these are up your alley. If you didn't, steer clear. GGLT

Regulrements; Pentium II 266, 64M8 RAM, 215MB hard drive space. Accommended Requirements: Pentium II 400 30 Support: None Multiplayer, LAN, Internet (2.3 players)

Publisher: Xicat Interactive • Developer: Funntice • \$39.95 • http://www.tkq.com ESRB Rating: Not rated, but suitable for children

Requirements: Pentium 200, 64MB RAM, 250MB hand drive space Recommended dequirements: None 30 Suggest: None Multiplayer: LAN, Internet (2-8 players)

Fublisker. Ubi Seft • Developer. Blue Byte • 539,99 • http://www.bluebyte.net/settlers4 • ESRE Rating:

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#### When you're sick and tired of people, insects will do fine

# Why Ants Don't Suck

y offering a gaming universe that is 1) based on a rather interesting best-selling book and 2) radically departs from the current real-time strategy norms by using insects instead of people, EMPIRE OF THE ANTS definitely positions itself as the right game at the right time. Because people, you see, are annoying. Whiny, hypercompetitive, passive-aggressive, self-centered people-they're everywhere. Turn on your television. Be it MTV or ABC, all you hear are people. incessantly whining about how bad they have it. I mean, really. You're on TV—how bad can things be?

They're on the television. They're at the gas station. They're eating in restaurants. They're online playing COUNTER-STRIKE with ignorant, asinine

MPIRE OF THE ANTS

viowed by George Johns

names loaded with stupid racial slurs and thirdgrade-caliber ass tokes. They work at corporate entities in New York, where their primary job function appears to be blocking your plans for a

wicked-cool gaming site, and their operational methods appear to be closely modeled after those of the Department of Motor Vehicles. They work in the government, where they cheat on their wives with young women and avoid anything genuine and honest. They are in-laws who need to micromanage every single aspect of their youngest daughter's wedding. They are teenagers who wear pants that ride so low you can see their pelvic bones. They are airline attendants who smile as they tell you your flight is cancelled and that the next one leaves in five hours

But why stop there? I'm even sick-heck, I'm most sick—of computer game people. Aside from the amusingly dysfunctional SIMS characters, why do most computer game characters look and act the same? Especially in the real-time strategy department. They carry AK 47s or flamethrowers. They drive trucks and planes, and they bomb and destroy

targets Except for color variations or the witty responses they emit when you click on them, they all look and act the same. When you're viewing the action from 20,000 feet, everybody starts to look alike, I guess.

So the characters in Strategy First's surprise summer sleeper, EMPIRE OF THE ANTS, represent a much-needed breath of fresh air, both for gamers and this reviewer (Note to self: Don't ever plan an



EMPIRE OF THE ANTS looks great . . . until you get too close to the ants and realize they're not 30 objects.

early September wedding, a mid-September honeymoon, and a late September Web site launch again.)

The only tricky part is that as you play through it, you'll wonder, is this game really that good? Or is it just so different that I find it engaging?

Hey, sometimes it's not easy to tell. When you begin EMPIRE OF THE ANTS, you're greated by some discouragingly ambiguous full-motion video introduction that amounts to very little and explains even less. But when you start playing the game, you'll be amazed at the in-game graphics, which depict ants and other insects and foliage in lifelike fashion. This game looks pretty good, you'll think to yourself. Then you'll set about playing as you would any other realtime strategy game since COMMAND & CONQUER.

And then you'll get frustrated, because EMPIRE OF THE ANTS exhibits some different play mechanics than those dictated by the current RTS paradigm. You can't just click on a worker ant and tell it to retrieve some food. That's not the way ants work. How they get their instructions in real life isn't very clear, but in this game ants are motivated by the nonspecific priorities you set. At first you'll feel confused. You might even be pissed off. Many a gamer just isn't going to get what EMPIRE OF THE ANTS is all about.

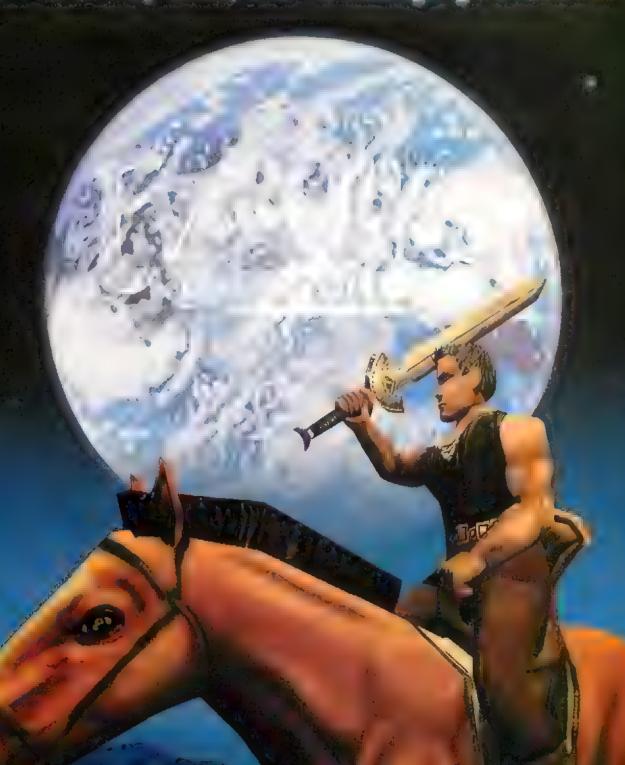
It's entirely possible that Microids (the game's

RATED PAOS Interestina meldina of war and realtime strategy. Gould have been so much more.

Regainements: Pentium II 233, 32MB RAM, 200MB hard drive space | DECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS | Pentium II 350, 54MB RAM 30 Supports Oirect30 Multiplayer: 1-8 players on LAN or Internet

Publisher: Strategy First • Developer: Microids • \$39.99 • www.strategylirst.com • ESR8 Rating: Everyone

# The World of Everbuest is Changing Forever\_



Coming December 2001

www.everquest.com









Ants are interesting creatures. Though the insects have instinctive, specific knowledge.

French developer) doesn't entirely get what EMPIRE OF THE ANTS is all about. The company's treatment of the game reflects a duality; They set the game structure up like a traditional RTS, but the gameplay requires anything but that. You engage in multiple, sort-of-sequential missions. You have a home base. You have to gain resources and build an infrastructure while engaging the enemy on multiple fronts. The mission objectives are precise and military and often require puzzle-solving. But successfully completing these missions requires unique tactics and thinking that gamers won't feel prepared for based on their experience.

But whose fault is that? You can easily argue that "flaws" like the above are more a manifestation of gamers' now-instinctive expectations of the realtime strategy genre. Of course, had Microids been as creative with their game mechanics as they were with the concept, this might not even be a point of contention

And that's the biggest frustration you'll experience with EMPIRE OF THE ANTS: what it could have been. Why didn't the game's designers build more on the narrative of Bernard Werber's book than on the mechanics of the real-time strategy genre? It's ironic—with some story writing, some built-in flow, and much more emphasis on the ants themselves, this could have been a classic. Instead, it's merely interesting.

But while you're figuring all this out, you'll find yourself absolutely sucked into the universe of ants and their fellow insects. You will fear the praying mantis, which can destroy all of your best-laid plans

> in a heartbeat. You will respect the beetle for its anttransporting capabilities. You will expectantly await your queen's egg-laying





You have very little control inside the anthill, other than being able to lay out passageways and entice the queen to lay eggs.

and follow the life cycles of your fledgling ants. You might even find yourself amazed at this tiny insect.

The game drives home how fleeting and unimportant individual life is to the ant. Of course, you could say the same about most other real-time strategy games, in which the only reason you create (human) units is to send them to their deaths. I'm not taking it any further than that. But you can . . . GGET

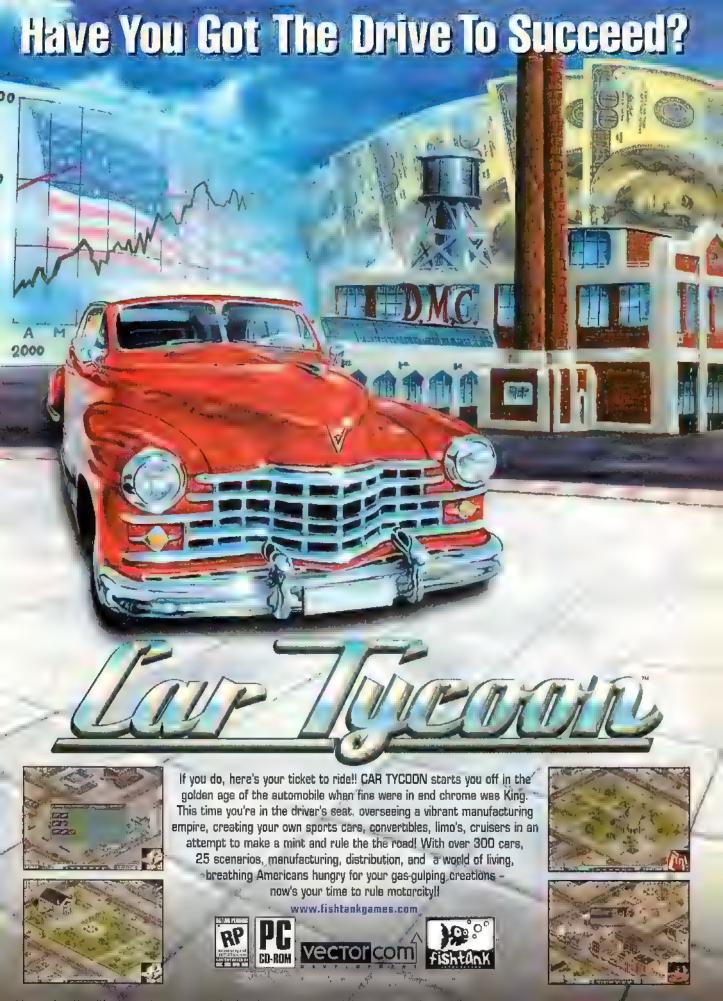
#### Planet of the Ants

Published in 1991, Bernard Werber's Empire of the Ants is a fascinating, if slightly manipulative work. Right. from the start, the author plants several mysteries in the mind of the reader. None of them are essential to the book, but they do serve as an effective story device. and will keep you turning the pages.

By attaching human emotions and thoughts to the entirely real, complex society of ants, Werber successfully creates wonder, intrigue, 🚕

and concern on the part of the reader.

In terms of story and charactor development, the ants are far more sophisticated than the clicked humans: But maybe that's the point. For any gamer, this is definitely a book worth reading. 4



#### Despite Bungie's MIA status, the MYTH II legacy continues

## The "A" Team

make no bones about it-I'm still a MYTH junkie. When Bungie sold out to Microsoft, I was crushed. I thought the MYTH series was dead. Part of the deal had Bungie selling off their MYTH franchise to Take Two. In the end, this turned out to be a good thing Talonsoft and Take Two grabbed a few experts from the MYTH map-making community hke Cydonian, GHOST, OZONE, Ares, Clem, Fisj. Iggy Popped, and Santa's Head and asked them to churn out an expansion based on the MYTH II engine. Hard work breeds success, and what they came up with is a MYTH scenario based on the small-unit exploits of the highly acclaimed, elite U.S. Special Forces soldiers known as Green Berets. Those familiar with the MYTH II WWII plug-in

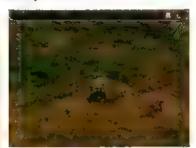
GREEN BERETS eviewed by Raphaet Liberatore RECON will be right at home with this game

Like MYTH II. GREEN BERETS is a tactical strategy game. But instead of following a sword-and-sorcery story line, GREEN BERETS takes place in Southeast

Asia during the Vietnam conflict of the 1960s and '70s. Gone are MYTH's swords, arrows, satchels, and fireballs, replaced by M16s, M60s, grenades, and rocket launchers.

There are 18 unit types, each with a distinct area of expertise, from A-Team leaders who can fight hand to hand, call air strikes, or pop smoke for resupply efforts, to Medics who heal fellow team members, and Huev helicopters for taking out the enemy in a big way. Enemy units are also distinct, with Viet Cong Mortar and rocket-propelled grenade units harassing your teams with longrange explosives. You'll be bedeviled by machetewielding VC Assassins sneaking up on your units, not to mention the more organized North Vietnamese Army regulars. Game balance is solid, considering the variety of units.





Helicopters like this UH-1 provide infiltration and exhitration for each mission. In some missions, players control helos in order to destroy enemy positions.



As in the original MYTH games, unit formation in GREEN BERETS plays a vital part in meeting your team's objectives—and ultimately in its survival. This team has just repulsed wave after wave of VC by forming a circle—and they took no casualties. They deserve Silver Stars.

GREEN BERETS is extremely challenging even at the easiest setting. There are 10 missions, each divided into several objectives, from capturing downed pilots and destroying enemy installations to escaping and evading the Viet Cong and calling in air strikes. One false move and your whole team can end up in body bags. Green Berets are noted for their ability to conduct ambush and counterambush tactics. The developers did a fine job recreating these types of missions. Each mission provides the look and feel of Vietnam jungles with plenty of rivers, hills, hooches, and bushes dotting the countryside. But your team has to remain alert, because these VC love to hide in the dense jungle and a wellplaced sniper can create havoc for your team.

To this day, MYTH II remains popular on bungle.net and GREEN BERETS builds on that popularity by providing a variety of multiplayer games. There are Platoon-type games of two large teams or multipleteam games with smaller squads, and then there's single-man elimination mode to test your skills against individual opponents. All unit types and single-player maps are accessible, including a selection of Southeast Asia multiplayer maps. There's even an option for playing Green Beret and VC units on regular MYTH II maps.

GREEN BERETS comes with the original MYTH II CD, so if you haven't played it yet, and RTS is your bag. you won't be disappointed. To the MYTH II WWII RECON grognards out there: This game is for you. With 10 well-made missions and a variety of units, the game's depth is well worth the small price.

Regularments: Pentium II 200, 64MB RAM 30 card 500MB of hard drive space. Was Compilifie: Power PC 601 or higher Recommended. Requirements: 128MS RAM 38 Support: Direct3D Multiplayer; LAN, Internet (2-16 players)

Publistier: Take Two Interactive Software • Developer: Talenseft • \$19.99 • www.green-berets.com • ESRB Retleg: Mature; animated bleed, animated violence



#### This very bad idea can be yours for just \$19.95!

## **Blunder Strike**

number of developers have been grabbing at Sierra's coattails in attempting to duplicate the COUNTER-STRIKE phenomenon.

Despite this, searching through packed retail shelves trying to find FPS games worthy of your time and money is still a bitch. The truth is, some developers have no business making FPS games. Add 3DO to that list. In a sorely misquided attempt to lure fantasy RPGers into the world of online fragfests, 3DO has tried to branch their acclaimed MIGHT AND MAGIC franchise into the shooter market. "Try" is the operative word here. LEGENDS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC has gobs of foul-smelling mediocrity smeared all over it.

LEGENDS OF MIGHT eviewed by Rephant Liberature

Free online servers

via Gamesov.

Mediocre every-

thing else.

CINB

LOMM demonstrates simplistic design at its best (worst?). You choose either the good or evil side by picking one of six character types—Paladin, Druid, Sorceress (Good), or Warrior, Heretic, and Archer (Evil). Then you play in one of four online game types at Game-

spy or over TCP/IP with up to 16 players. Straightforward, eh? Pretty lame, too. Apathy rapidly sets in.

First, the good-versus-evil concept is unimaginative and bland. If there were an intriguing story line, it might have worked. But there isn't, so it doesn't.

Second, in an attempt to create game balance, 3DO created character classes, but they all share similar capabilities in running, jumping, weapons, and equipment use. Paladins can use a bow, and Heretics can fight with axes, both without restrictions. So character classes amount to skins that differentiate characters only visually, because everyone can fight equally well with bows, swords, or scrolls. To be fair, some characters do possess an item or two unique to their class, like the Archers' Eye Bow, but these don't enhance the game in any way.

Third, the selection of weapons, armor, and magic available for equipping characters is paltry. It would have been nice to see more equipment assigned to

> each class and presented as something to strive for later in the game.



There's nothing special about wands, staves, and rods. They fire some sort of laser beam or blast and all seem to do the same thing. Secondary fire features are a tad more interesting. But what's the point of having a "Far Sight" ability in a wand during a close melee fragfest?



The LOMM HUD is very straightforward. The crystal ball reveals your teammates' or monsters' positions. But it's not as in-depth as the MYTH II or DIABLO II minimaps.

Games are divided into four scenarios. Sword in the Stone, Rescue the Princess, Warlord Escape, and Slav the Dragon Despite the Camelot names, they're standard FPS teamplay fare like Capture the Flag

Players begin by equipping their characters using the menu at predetermined Purchase Zones. As the game progresses, just as in COUNTER-STRIKE, characters earn money to buy better equipment and arms. The ability to increase a character's level, stats, or skills would have made LOMM more appealing. But no, 3DO didn't include that In LOMM, combat success is simply a matter of characters with better weapons and armor upgrades having the advantage. The bottom line is that LOMM is a slavish copy of COUNTER-STRIKE dressed in fantasy drag. The one exception: You can add monsters to some scenarios. Why? Did some COUNTER-STRIKE-playing 3DO programmer really think, "The only thing standing between Hostage Rescue and greatness is the lack of mummies. It is my mandate to add those mummies!"

Although LOMM uses the LithTech 3D engine, I found game mechanics a tad slow when reloading bows, slashing opponents with swords, and dodging monster attacks. The only plus is that it's stable, and

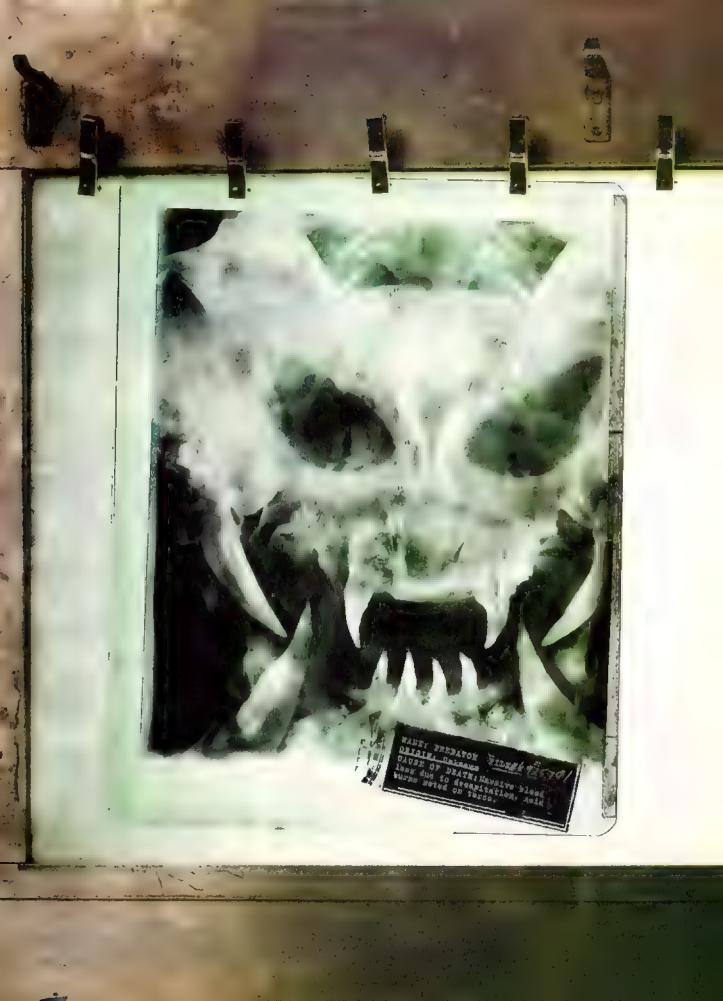
> the interface is easy to navigate. Some of the maps have a nice layout, too.

In the end, LOMM is a cheap shooter with no real appeal. It pays lip service to its fantasy trappings, its alleged gameplay style, and a distinguished franchise that shouldn't even be associated with this mess

3DO should be ashamed.

Icquirentis: Pentium 1 300, 54MB RAM, 30 hardware acceleration, 550MB hard drive space Recommended Requirements: 128MB RAM 30 Separt: Direct30 Mattherger: TCP/IP for LAN or Gamespy (1-16 players)

Publisher: 3DO • Developer: 3DO • \$19.95 • www.3do.com • ESRB Rating: Teen (13+); blood, violence



#### **EUROFIGHTER TYPHOON sets its sights low and off-target**

## Lite Don't Make Right

ardcore flight sim buffs often make the mistake of thinking that any sim with pretty graphics and simplified controls is a good game for novices. EUROFIGHTER TYPHOON aims for that mass market, but numerous design flaws demonstrate that making a good game for casual PC pilots is not as easy as one might think.

In the near future, tensions between Russia and NATO have erupted into war. Your task is to defend the strategically critical island of Iceland against a Russian invasion. CNN-style newscasts present the events of the war. The graphics of the world in which you fight are quite nice, convincingly portray-

> ing hills and valleys, rivers and ocean, and the fighting machines.

The core of EUROFIGHTER TYPHOON involves managing six pilots, chosen from a roster of pilots listed with their characteristics (such as health, experience, combat expertise, and so on).

These six squadron members operate in parallel, their status (eating, sleeping, in combat, in the hospital, dead, and so on) displayed as icons on the bottom of the screen. If, while in the middle of the dogfight, another icon pops up telling you that another pilot is attacking a ground target, you can jump into that mission by clicking on the icon. Being able to jump into the most interesting mission at any time is good in theory for a game targeted at casual flyers, but it will likely frustrate those same gamers. Your pilots are mept enough that, without your intervention, they will usually fail their missions and often be shot down. Thus you find yourself constantly forced to jump from the middle of one mission to the middle of another and then into another. This can be disori-

> enting and destroys the illusion that you are an actual fighter pilot

engaged in a war.

Novices will also be baffled as to why so many sorties fail due to a lack of proper weapons—if you don't also jump into each briefing session, planes will often be loaded with weapons completely inappropriate for the mission. Ironically, in addition to the hectic nature of the missions, the other key problem is long periods of mactivity Particularly after losing a couple pilots, you will often face five to ten minutes-in real time-of



A fully loaded Typhoon hunts for Russians.

waiting for a mission to be assigned, even with time acceleration turned on. That's hardly fun for any gamer, casual or not.

The campaign is a mix of dynamic missions within a scripted series of events. The events of the war unfold the same way each time you play, but specific missions will vary according to how well you are doing. The campaign is interesting and seems well made the first time through (except for a very stupid "kill the big boss" last mission), but the fact that the war unfolds the same way each time kills replay interest. There are no single-mission, instant action, or mission builder options—although you can play some of the multiplayer missions solo—puzzling omissions in a game targeted at casual gamers.

Lest this sound completely negative, I should say that the actual missions can be entertaining Avionics are simple and fairly effective, with instruments represented as onscreen multifunction displays. The flight model is very fly-by-wire, and thus quite forgiving, allowing novices to yank and bank to their hearts' content. Unlike many "lite" sims, the opposing AI's sophisticated team tactics challenge even veteran flyers. Your own weapons have reduced effectiveness "for gameplay reasons," but this again will be problematic for novices, as they'll wonder why their short-range missiles and supposedly sophisticated air-to-ground weapons consistently miss their mark

The wide range of mission types will hold your interest the first time through the campaign, and the relatively clever enemy AI will result in quite a few edge-of-the-seat moments. Still, the design problems keep EUROFIGHTER TYPHOON wide of the mark of an ideal lite sim GGI

PHOS Nice graphics; easy to jump in and play; some of the missions can be a lot of fun. FINS Campaign is good for only one cun: no single-player option; long waits between missions; doesn't bit the mark for serious simmers or novices.

eviewed by Jen Lackey

Regairements: Pentium 256, 64MB RAM, 39 accelerated video card with minimum 8MB RAM, 650MB hard drive space. Iccomizated Requirements: Same 30 Support: Direct 3D Multiplayer: LAN, Internet (2-16 playors)

Publisher: Take Twe Interactive Settware, Inc. • Beveleper: Rege Software • \$35.59 • www.rege.com ESRE Rating: Everyone



## POSEIDON: ZEUS OF OFFICIAL EXPANSION



\*\*\*

We have a theory about expansion packs here at CGW. If they offer more of the same gameplay, while offering some substantial new goodles, then that should be good enough for the fans of the original game. And on paper, that's what POSEIDON seems to do for fans of ZEUS. MASTER OF OLYMPUS. There are new buildings in each category, new gods and heroes, new trading partners, and so on

But when you're in the game, those goodies seem like nothing more than a bunch of new icons that don't have any impact on the gameplay. Of course, hardcore fans will probably delight in spending hours checking out and placing the new buildings, some of which are admittedly quite cool (the Hippodrome, for example). But you can count me in the group that prefers the payoff of overcoming smart All and a challenging mission over the instant gratification of watching an animated fruittender juggle oranges. Call me crazy

I have to give major props to Impressions, though, for including an adventure editor with POSEIDON. It's the one thing serious ZEUS fans will have to fall back on if the new stuff doesn't stimulate them like a poke in the ass with a trident. —Tom Price

Genre: Strategy • Publisher: Sierra • Developer: Impressions Games • \$ 20 • http://poseidon.impressions games.com/ • ESRB Rating: Everyone

#### **RULES OF THE GAME**



Never has sports trivia been so dull. Based on an eponymous board game predecessor, RULES OF THE GAME is a sports trivia game that plays like a badly written quiz show. It falls entirely and utterly out of bounds. The MC, Joe Banks, is about as lame as game show hosts come, futilely attempting YOU DON'T KNOW JACK-style humor. After a couple of rounds, not only does his babbling become unbearable, it hamstrings gaine flow. Thankfully, you can turn off his annoying commentary. But even with his commentary disabled, his antics remain visible—sitting at his MC desk, he twirls basketballs or hits paper baseballs as players try

answering questions Pathetic.

The game supports up to four players going toe-to-toe in the hot seat or online at Gamespy, RULES OF THE GAME advertises more than 1,500 questions spread out in seven categories, from golf and baseball to college hoops and football. There's also a miscellaneous category that quizzes you on obscure games like badminton, tennis, horseshoes, darts, and the like The questions are rarely brain stompers. so don't worry about busting a vein. But some of the questions and answers are downright confusing Take for example, "How many caddies can you have during a game?" Answer: "As many as you'd like, but only one at a time." And although RULES OF THE GAME supposedly has tons of questions, many of the same ones spring up, even in the beginning rounds. This game stinks. —Raphael Liberatore

Genre: Puzzles/classics • Publisher: Infogrames • Developer: Random Games • \$30 • www.infogrames.com • ESBB Rating: Everyone

#### MEGA MAN LEGENDS





Mega Man, Roll, and Data the talking monkey (must...suspend...disbehef) star in MEGA MAN LEGENDS, an RPG-style 3D action game. Together they traverse caves and towns battling the Bonne family with wide-eyed anime mayhem.

What started as a graphically subpar (it seemed bizarre to require a 3D card when everything looks software-rendered) yet enjoyable experience ended up leaving me unsatisfied, because it repeatedly crashed at the end

Still, MEGA MAN LEGENDS has many subquests that are fun to try, the best being the burglar chase scene and timed racing. Boss fights prove challenging, because you must spend time considering a plan of attack before fighting, but overall it lacks the much-touted "legendary gameplay."

Overly complicated controls will bog down casual FPS players (no mouse compatibility), but the RPG elements are balanced

Storywise, it tries too hard to develop a plot, with characters that become increasingly unbelievable. Mega Man's exclamation, "You're alive! That's great!" to a former enemy seems unbecoming and naïve for a hero, even if it is only a game.

Fans will need to change their expectations to embrace the RPG play style, and anime lovers can laugh at the Japanese characters. Their huge eyes and out-of-sync dialogue make for fun, Mystery Science Theater 3000 fodder for only a bit more than a night at a bad movie —Wen Laws

Genre: Action-adventure • Publisher: Capcom • Developer; Capcom • \$10.95 • www.capcom.com • ESRB Rating; Everyone

### STARFLEET COMMAND 2: ORION PIRATES





Looks like all that time Scotty spent crawling around in the Jeffries tube has finally paid off: We now have a STARFLEET COMMAND game that works out of the box.

Billed as an expansion for STARFLEET COMMAND 2, ORION PIRATES is actually a standalone game that offers a number of new ships and races to play.

Why call it an expansion instead of a sequel? Because there's nothing radically new here. Like SFC 2, ORION PIRATES features real-time strategic combat between starships, with battles playing out more like deliberately paced naval encounters than click-fest RTS skirmishes.

Set up instant action battles. play campaigns as any of a variety of Star Trek races, or battle online in the persistent Dyanverse II campaign. Visible changes to the engine are minor, with some enhanced special effects and a number of more detailed ship models-and the same confusing STARFLEET COMMAND interface.

Despite all that, this is a better game, not only because it's relatively bug-free, but also because

It has noticeably better artificial intelligence Computer captains push their ships to the limits and make deadly use of hitand-run tactics.

The biggest addition is the eight new playable Orion Pirate cartels, each with its own campaign. Each has about 30 ship types, some common to all the Orions and some that are modifications of ships of other races-for instance, the Korgatli cartel uses a mixture of Orion and Klingon ships. You can also play any of the original races, but only in a dynamic "conquest" campaign without a scripted story line (you'll need SFC 2 to do that).

A number of new slup and weapon types for all the races from the Starfleet Battles board game make an appearance in ORION PIRATES, including hyper advanced "x-ships" with super deadly weapons such as Phaser Xs and heavy photons. Taking out a dreadnought with a light cruiser can be fun

In spite of its flaws, ORION PIRATES is the best game yet in the STARFLEET COMMAND series, and it's a bargain at 30 bucks. - Denny Atkin

Genre: Strategy . Publisher: Interplay . Developer: Taldren . \$30 . www.interplay.com . ESRB Rating, Everyone; violence



Old-school wargamers, the kind who think all you need for a good game are a hexagon grid map. some counters, and a combat resolution table, will love COMBAT COMMAND 2: DESERT RATS, It's a deliberate throwback to those very board games grognards cherish. Everyone else should save their 40 bucks

DESERT RATS is grand, tactical level WWII desert warfare as viewed on some far-away general's map. Command control is paramount You must keep units in range of headquarters or their movement is halved and they will not coordinate attacks. The other key to success is maneuvering into position Surround enemy units or hit them with multihex attacks Tank duels are fast and decisive but entrenched infantry can take days to root out. Shok log-of-war rules and decent AI keep the scenarios challenging, but the lack of a campaign game and sterile graphics made me feel more like Robert McNamara crunching numbers at the Pentagon than Erwin Rommel sweeping across the sands of

Ultimately, that sense of abstract detacliment is the downfall of DESERT RATS. Without a strong visual identity, it ceases to be a game about desert warfare and becomes nothing but numbers on a screen. - John Fletcher

Genre: Wargame . Publisher: Shrapnel Games • Developer: Boku Strategy Games • \$39.95 • www.shrapnelgames.com \* ESRB Rating: Unrated

# NOTHING WINS A WAR LIKE GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED PROPAGANDA!



### LOW ON TROOPS?

These brainwash camps will turn civilians into soldiers dedicated to your cause.







Violence



### RULLETINE

You've got the enemy plants in a small village Built the victory worth taking olyllan gasusities

### GOOD PRESS ISN'T BOUGHT

it's made With mot training center making propaganda la may



By GARY KEITH

## IT'S TIME AN RTS GAME GAVE YOU A REAL WAR.

EAL WAR IS NEVER cut and dry. The media criticizes your every maneuver. Rabid public opinion erodes your army's budget. Terrorists wield propaganda against you. That's why real war is won with the guts to fight with every weapon you have - even spin control and civilian manipulation - to keep your forces rolling. It's an intense war. Someone's got to win it.



When your forces need that extra "kick," a nice human shield gives great cover from oncoming assaults!



Watch out! It only takes one enemy rocket to turn a civilian rescue mission into a public relations nightmare

#### VERBATIM

66 Everything that concerns the bombing of peaceful residents is the ill-intended propaganda of terrorists.

-Wednutz Petrie, Executar Prince Michigan, New Ltd. 1999

**##**1t has been sald that in war, truth is the first casualty. That may be so for the media policy of an isolated dictatorship, but not for NATO. ??

-Ge Javier Salanz, The Secretary Beneral of MASS, May 1th 1958

SEP UT MIDER 18, 2001

IN STORES SEPTEMBER 2001





## AO BATTLES:

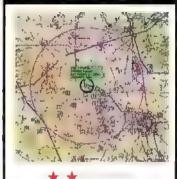


The list of Vietnam War computer games since Avalon Hill's VC in 1983 is a short one. While Vietnam scenarios for THE OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR exist, they don't capture the operational problems faced by forces in that conflict, as few battles at the battalion level and above were serious contests. The serious challenges were faced at the squad level. and John Tiller's new game engine captures this brilliantly.

There is much in this design that will be familiar to veterans of Tiller's other games, but here it all fits together better. Tiller's painstaking tracking of casualties, which felt cumbersome and out-of-place in the PANZER CAMPAIGN series, works brilhantly in this game: Not only is it accurate in simulation terms. but it also manages to focus the game squarely on the individual soldier and his plight. It's one of the rare instances of using the computer to simultaneously increase realism and streamline the game design.

The game takes a few shortcuts, such as abstracting some support elements and avoiding detailed ballistics models. But rather than detracting from the game, they simply make the squad-based element stand out. Too few wargames really know what they're trying to simulate This game exhibits no such ambiguity. It's not the most original design, but it's one of the best of recent years. ---Bruce Geryk

Genre: Wargame . Publisher: HPS Simulations . Developer. John Tiller • \$40 + shipping • www.hpssims.com • ESRB Rating: Not rated



Some games try to be simulations. DECISIVE ACTION is a simulation that tries to be a game. Unfortunately, while it does a good job of presenting the issues important to a division commander in a modern conflict, it doesn't do a good job of making them engaging or interesting.

The game uses turns that are broken into phases. The system allows you to give orders that the units try to fulfill during the turn's phases. Battlefield intelligence is a crucial aspect of gameplay, and you have to watch the map very carefully to determine what your movements have uncovered. The game has many of the key elements of modern warfare, such as chemical weapons, air strikes, electronic warfare, and so on. The problem is that the restrictive game system limits player interaction to an extent that may be realistic but makes the game feel rather bland.

DECISIVE ACTION goes a long way toward showing just how artificial regularized hexgrids and arbitrary factorcounting are to wargaming But at some level, wargames are supposed to be games, and these conventions prevent designs from feeling too mechanical-a word that antly describes DECISIVE ACTION. -Bruce Geryk

Genre: Wargame . Publisher: **HPS Simulations \* Developer:** John Tiller • \$40 + shipping • www.hpssims.com • ESRB Rating: Not rated





Six minutes per turn, 250 meters per hex. That's the scale of Avalon Hill's landmark board game, Panzerbhtz, and any computer game at this scale covering the subject that DIVIDED GROUND does invites comparison with Panzerblitz's well-known sequel, ARAB ISRAELI WARS. While the board game was a redesign meant to tailor a game system to a new era, the computer version is just an old game system with some new data tables

With a new equipment list, the game does a good job of simulating the enormous increases in firepower since the World War II years. The increased range and lethality of anti-armor weapons, as well as the emergence in later years of significant infantry anti-tank capability, means that DIVIDED GROUND plays very differently than previous games in the series. It's a whole new world of warfare

Unfortunately, you don't have much of a chance to explore it because DIVIDED GROUND's scenario design is quite possibly the worst of any recent computer came. There is hardly a worthwhile scenario in the bunch, which is a crime considering some of the battles available for study In many cases, the scenario description is more interesting than the gameplay. It's difficult to make a bad Chinese Farm scenario, but this game manages to do it. DIVIDED GROUND is essentially a dataset. If you want an actual wargame to go with that, you'll have to design it yourself —Bruce Geryk

Genre: Wargame • Publisher: Take Two Interactive • Developer: TalonSoft • \$45 • www.talonsoft.com • ESRB Rating: Not

## DARK ORBIT





"Hey, you want to review DARK ORBIT? It's supposed to be DIABLO in spaaaaaace," my editor said, just like that, with reverberating echo sound effects, "DIABLO in spaaaaaace. . . " How could I resist?

So I was off with WildTangent's new downloadable game. You play a miner piloting a mining ship on the 10th planet, Nibiru, now overrun with cranky aliens waking up from a long nap, Everyone's dead but you, and all you want to do is get the hell out of Dodge. You fly your ship from a top-down perspective, watching as it bounces off canyon walls like a bumper car while you zap aliens. You collect the mineral Malidium, find ships to scavenge, and return to base to deposit the loot and spend the proceeds to upgrade your ship. There are even teleporters that work

like the Town Portal spells in DIABLO

So it's sci-fi instead of fantasy with some sharp 3D graphics, zap and crash instead of back and slash, and lots and lots of repetition. The beauty of DIABLO is that beneath the repetition there's infinite variety. Sadly, beneath DARK ORBIT'S repetition is only more of the same. DARK ORBIT is a one-way rocket ship journey to Dreamland Zzzzz.—Mark Asher

Genre: Action . Publisher: WildTangent . Developer: WildTangent . \$21 . www.wildtangent.com . ESRB Rating: Unrated



FIGHT OR BUILD? Fight through 21 missions with ful storyline, castle building and lots of siege combat, or quietly build and manage castles in the economic campaign.

IN-DFPTH SEIGE COMBAT. Defend your castle with a multitude of medieval weapons such as mosts, pitch ditches, boiling oil, kalling pits mangonels, drawbridges, flaming arrows, towers, turrels, battlements, caged dogs and more.

STORM A REAL CASTLE.
Feel like a quick fight?
Attack or defend one
of magy pre-built
historically accurate
castles.

LAY SIEGE TO YOUR NEIGHBOR'S CASTLE in a multiplayer game on the LAN or Internet using Game Spy.

CREATE YOUR OWN SCENARIOS. Use the fully-integrated scenario editor to create new mission for you and your friends.









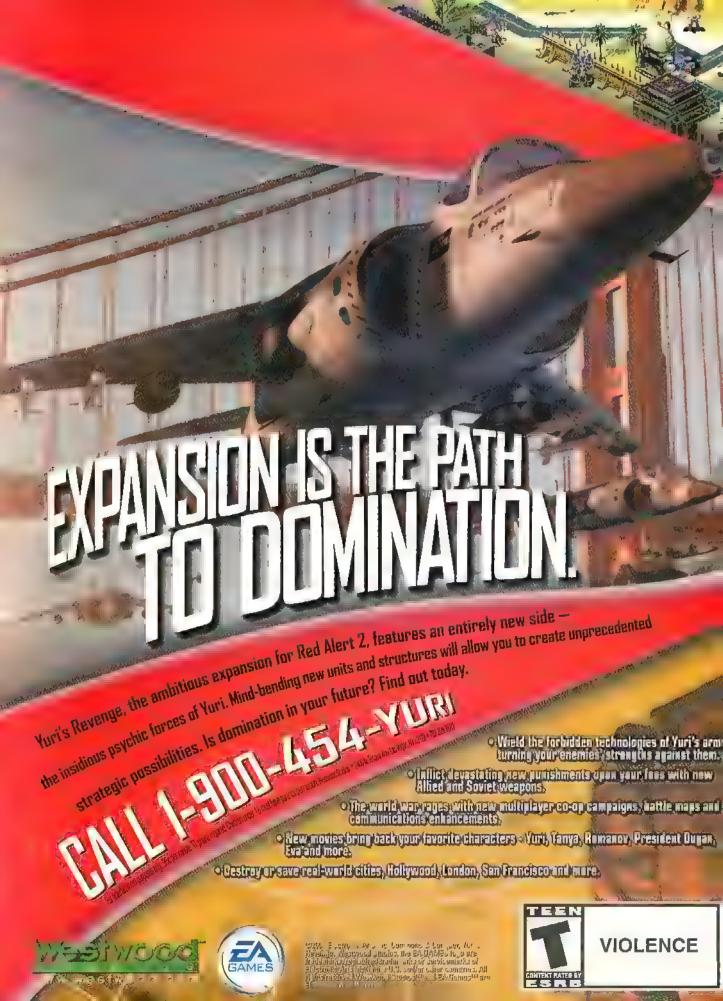


**BUILD THE ULTIMATE** 

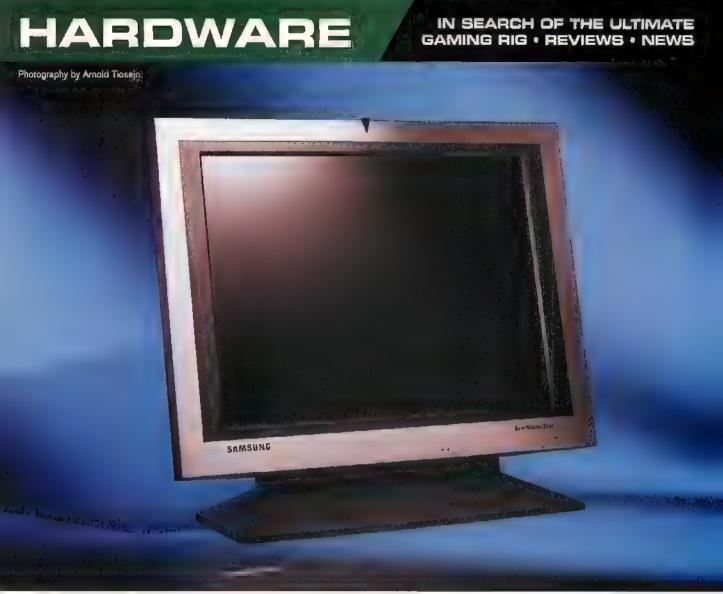
CASILE, using an in-depth castle construction set. Tired of typyrying about invaders? Play the freedom to build and decorate your castle to your heart's content.

WWW.FIREFLYWORLDS.COM

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Not the best gaming monitor, but it looks mighty fine

Companies that make LCDs are always crow

ing about the advantages of LCDs over CRTs "Low radiation emission means that you won't die of brain cancer." Or, "LCDs use less power so you'd be conserving energy Whatever. The truth is, people don't buy LCDs because they're healthy or energy efficient People buy LCDs because they're sexy as hell

You wouldn't believe how many peopleupon walking by my office and noticing this baby sitting on my desk—felt compelled nay, drawn by some strange force to come in and touch, ogle, drool, or otherwise comment on this super-sweet monitor, LCDs like this one are CEO stuff, man You know what I'm saying, s.x-figures, beach houses, trophy wives. And this monitor's hefty \$4,000 price tagican attest to that

A 213 inch (FT, active matrix LCD, with a

maximum resolution of 1600x1200, dual (analog and digital) video inputs, picture-inpicture, composite and 5 video connections, the SyncMaster 210T is the be all and end all of 21-inch LCDs

Longinally hooked the SyncMaster 210T up to my VisionTek GeForce3's analog videoout. While basic Windows applications looxed fine, DVDs, and especially games. looked fuzzy as the LCD's slow redraw rate. (slower than a CRT's) was blatantly obvious. Then Linstalled a Hercules 3D Prophet .II the 210T has a DV out connection—and things changed for the better, With the standard analog connection COUNTER-STR KE was virtually unplayable, but with the digital video connection I could actually play without getting nauseous. The thing is, though, performance was still well below that of a CRT of comparable size



The SyncMaster 210T is not for the faint of heart at nearly four large. You're gonna behard pressed to justify this purchase to the little woman. If, however, you happen to be walking by your boss' office after hours and you see one sitting on his underused desk might I suggest liberating it to the comfort of your den? - William O'Neul





Chip maker's mobo design makes a lot of sense

## **Next for NVIDIA: Motherboards?**

Having won the graphics technology battle—at least until ATI's Radeon R8500 comes out—NVIDIA has set its sights on a new target: the motherboard market Realizing that traditional motherboard designs create bottlenecks and latency issues that hamper a system's performance, NVIDIA has developed the nForce Platform Processing Architecture. Based primarily on their IGP (Integrated Graphics

Processor) and MCP (Media & Communications Processor) technologies, nForce-based motherboards will boast everything from GeForce2MX-quality graphics and Dolby Digital 5.1 audio to built-in ethernet. If you're thinking that this is just the technology to speed up that Pentium 4 of yours, then think again At press time nForce motherboards will only support Athlon and Duron processors.





nForce boards will ship with two demos. INTRUDER, an FPS, shows off the board's graphics powess and BATTLE-DOME shows off the DD 5.1 capabilities.



### America's the Bomb Diggity F'sho!

I have the best job in the world. Not only do I get to play with some of the coolest junk around, I often have the privilege of getting it before anyone else does (read: Vederman). For instance, I'm writing this editorial on Dell's latest topof-the-line notebook, the inspiron 8100, while my wife watches the latest episode of "Sex and the City." I thank God every day that I'm a member of Generation X.

To put this laptop through its paces, I ran through my standard barrage of tests: buttloads of COUNTER-STRIKE, downloading videos and movie trailers, stealing music with Morpheus, and watching The Patriot on DVD. And you know, something occurred to me while I watched Mel Gibson run around South Carolina with a hatchet: America is the bombl

As you no doubt know, I've been pissing off a lot of people lately with my constant Republican bashing. But the thing is, while I think a lot of people are selfish and want nothing more than for America to become a plutocracy, I do in fact love this place. Think about it: Here I am, a spoiled black kid from Oakland, California, who gets paid to sit in an office all day playing games.

That being said, I don't want any Republicans who read CGW to get their panties in a bunch. So here's my challenge to our more conservative readers: In 100 words or less, convince me, a black, bleeding-heart liberal, with a second-grade son in public school and daughter about to go into kindergarten, why I should become a Republican. The reader with the best letter will not only see their words printed in the hallowed pages of this here magazine, I'll also send 'em one of the many useful tchotchkes I have lying around.



## Arm Yourself with the Best

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## The King Kong of laptops, and almost as heavy Sheer Dominance!



Sancionaries -	Vender Computers	NP Pavilion 5000	Boll Inspired \$100	
Graphics card:	CeForces 64MB	CieForce3 64MB	GeForce2Go 32MB	
Quake 3 16-bit (demo 127):	152 6	160.1	73.1	
Quake 3 32-bit (demo 127):	150.3	158.2	53.9	
Unreal Tournament 16-bit:	65.99	60,02	58.56	
Expendable 16-bit:	101.6	72.96	87.89	
Expendable 32-bit:	102.2	72.86	49.98	
3D GameGauge 2.5:*	102.2	93 8	63.5	
3D WinMark 2000:	200	209	71.5	
3DMark2001:	5467	5752	2016	

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If Shaq were a laptop he'd be the Dell

Inspiron 8100: huge, powerful, and undeniably the best it has a list of components. that makes hardware junkies like me shive: with joy: a 1.13GHz Pentium III processor. 256MB RDRAM NVIDIA'S 32MB GeForce2 Go graphics card, a 15-inch Ultra XGA TFT display with a maximum resolution of 1600x1200, a 20GB ATA 100 (4,200RPM) hard drive, and a 6x max DVD/4x CD-RW combo drive. This rig will have you doing everything from playing COUNTER-STRIKE to watching DVDs, whether you're sitting onyour couch or chilling in your favorite watering hole. Throw in Firewire, 5-Video, and S/PD/F ports, and it's safe to say that you may never use your desktop again.

Accolades as de, however, the 8100's real beauty shone through when we started throwing benchmarks at it. While

> its 3DGameGauge score of 63.45 is well below

that of the FIP and Voorloo desktops

that we tested, QUAKE III ARENA frame rates of 73 ifps on a laptop are freakin' incredible! Furthermore, the 8100 was right with the two desktop.

machines in UT, and it even beat the HP in EXPENDABLE's 16-bit test Damn!

While the 8100 is in no way expected to compete with GeForce3-based desktop machines (its 3DMark2001 score of 2016 can attest to that) the fact that 3DMark2001's lobby scene not only ran on it but looked fantastic speaks tomes. about this laptop's ablaties Basically, if you're in the market for a gaming laptop and you can front the nearly three large for it, then consider your purchasing decision made -William O'Neal

\*3D GameGauge is a performance metric that tests the speed of nine high-end 3D games. The 3D GameGauge score is an average of the frame rates from those games, yielding a single number that can be compared across different systems.

ly the belle of the mobile

graphics ball, but midnight is

fast approaching. ATI claims that

of the Inspiron 8100 tested here.

Its upcoming Mobility Radeon 7500

gets scores near 4000 in 3DMark2001 on a Dell Inspiron 8000—nearly double the score

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HP's 1.7GHz Pavilion is about as kick-ass as any boutique machine

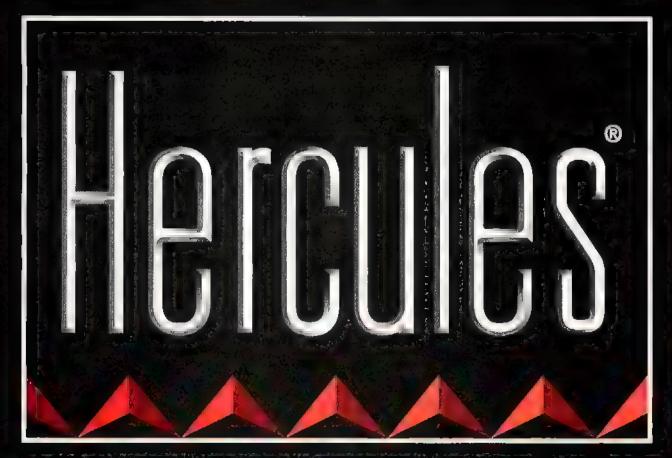


Bonchmarks -	Vender Computers	W Pavilion 9800	Bell Inspiren SiBB
Graphics card:	CeForce3 64MB	CeForce3 64MB	GeForce2Go 32MB
Quake 3 16-bit (demo 127):	152 6	160.1	731
Quake 3 32-bit (demo 127):	150.3	158.2	53 9
Unreal Tournament 16-bit:	65.99	60.02	58 56
Expendable 16-bit:	101.6	72.96	8789
Expendable 32-bit:	102.2	72.86	49.98
3D GameGauge 2,5:*	102.2	93.8	63.5
3D WinMark 2000:	200	209	71.5
3DMark2001:	5467	5752	2016

Ing with desktop machines from Falcon Northwest, Alienware, and Voodoo Computers, I was a little skeptical when three boxes with HP logos all over them showed up. As a bona fide techno-snob like many of you am want to thumb my nose at consumer-oriented companies like HP and Compaq.

Built around the ASUS P4T (Intel 850 chipset) motherboard, the HP 9800 boasts a 1.7GHz P4 with a 400MHz front side bus, 256MB PC800 RDRAM, HP s 19-inch MX90 mon tor, a 70GB hard drive, 16x DVD-ROM drive, 12x8x32 CD-RW, Creative SB Live Value

"3D GameGauge is a performance metric that tests the speed of nine high-end 3D games. The 3D GameGauge score is an average of the frame rates from those games, yielding a single number that can be compared across different systems. L E G E N D R Y



## Audio and Video cards

www.hetcules.com



Continued from page 124 sound card, 64MB ASUS GeForce3 card, and Polk Audio AMR 150 4.1 speakers. In other words, this machine is about as kick-ass as any that a boutique shop might put together

I put the 9800 through our standard suite of tests 3D GameGauge 2.5, Ziff-Davis' 3D WinMark 2000, and MadOnion's 3DMark 2001 As this is an Intel-based machine, I wasn't at all surprised by the Pavillon's awesome QUAKE III ARENA frame rates of 160.1fps in 16-bit mode But the Pavilion ended up scoring a lower-than expected 93.78 in CGW's 3D GameGauge 25, due mainly to its low EXPENDABLE scores. In other words, if you were to remove EXPENDABLE from the tests, the Pavilion's score would be more in line with that of the Voodoo machine we tested last month That said, though, the Pavilion beat the Voodoo machine in both 3D WinMark 2000 and 3DMark2001

But enough about that. As an all-around family machine, the Pavilion boasts a bevy of extras that will please almost any home user, The machine has four USB ports (two in the rear and two in the front) as well as three Firewire ports. This means that transferring video from your camcorder should be a snap If you feel like taking on the daunting task of editing that video you Look at your cousin Rick's bachelor party. You can also use the Firewire port to connect to an external hard drive, like the Maxtor one that we have here

The 9800's only shortcomings are in the sound department. Since nearly every sys tem that we've reviewed lately has come. with Klipsch ProMedia 4 is, we've grown accustomed to sound of that quality. And while the Polk Audio AMR 150 4.15 that came with this system are good, they aren't Klipsches, Also, the Pavilion's supposedly "tool-free" mechanism for accessing the graphics card and various PCI cards wasn't very tight when it arrived and the sound card kept slipping out—a problem that we easily fixed

The bottom line is that the 9800 is a fantastic machine, and it's backed upby a big company, so you know that they won't be out of business before your warranty wears out.

Microsoft brings back its original eight-button, two-trigger gamepad. And we say, "Huzzah!"

## Restore to Previous Version? < Yes>

Years ago I did my first tour-of-duty with Ziff

Davis as the technical editor of the nowdefunct Computerlife magazine. During those stoned times I would while away countless hours beating the hell out of CGW's then-technical editor (this weird guy named Dave "Shaft" Salvator) at FIFA. While Dave swore by some strange gamepad that Gravis made (I think it was called the Stinger or something), I would dish out endless drubbings thanks to the SideWinder GamePad, With eight buttons and two triggers, I had Just enough control to show Shaft that his World Cup team of Speedowearing Brazilian goatherders was nothing compared to a team of half-crazed North Koreans captained by yours truly and his trusty gamepad, Sure, after each game my hands were frozen into a horrible tangle of thumbs and fingers that Dave dubbed "SideWinder Claw," but the fact remained I was un-freakin'-stoppable!

"it'll cause a little pain. But you know what? Victory is never free!" And after logging a ton of hours playing FIFA 2001, SUPERBIKE 2001, and TONY HAWK PRO SKALER 2, I real zed that using the SideWinder GamePad USB is a lot like steeping with an ex-girifriend whom you're not quite "finished with"; sometimes you gotta take a step back if you want to go forward. -William O'Neal









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## KILET RIGS The best recipe for building your ultimate gaming machine



#### Power Rig

1d been depating whether to appliade to a 17CHz Pentium 4, when suddenly Intel made the choice easier by unleasning its 20Hz rhip Being a geek, I found the opportunity to build a machine witharguably—the fastest CPU available too tasty to pass up. So, a week later I built this month's Power Rig and was so impressed by its perfor mance that I decided to stay with it.

If you're on a budget, then go with a 14GHz Athlon, an ASUS A7A266 or A7M266 motherboard, and 256MB of DDR RAM, You won't suffer any PC envy with that kind of system

#### Lean Machine

My Lean Machine hasn't changed much, but for the price (one that seems to go down a little every day), it sist ll a pretty good deal. As soon as I get one of those nForce based motherboards intend to build it up That'll increase performance (by adding a GeForce2MX and the nForce's onboard Dolby Digital \$.1) while lowering the price.

#### Side-by-Side

Here's how my new Power Rig stacks up to the big boys. (We reviewed the Pavillon 9800 this month, and the \$3,200 Voodoo Monsoon last month.) You'll notice that the 2GHz Power Rig didn't always come out on top because it doesn't have the same components or tuning tweaks as the other rigs, but that's about to change. Next month, i'll tell. you which performance tweaks we used to put our beast out front.

#### Power Rig Components

Component	Manufacturer/Model	Price
Casa_	Antec SX-635	\$90
Motherboard	Intel 0850MD	\$150
CPU	28Hz Pentium 4/400MHz FSB	\$562
Memory	Kingston 256MB PC800 RDRAM	\$280
Graphics Card	Elsa Gladiac 920	\$400
3.5" Floppy Onve	Teac	\$20
Hard Drive	Maxtor DianipadMax BDGB EIDE	\$200
CD-RW	Plaxtor PlaxWriter 24/10/40A	\$250
OVE-ROM Drive	Creative PG-OVD Encore 12x	\$150
Monitar	Samsung SyncMaster 9650F 19"	\$280
Sound Card	Creative Labs Sound Biaster Audigy	\$250
Speakers	Altac Lansing ACABBO Golby Cigital THX Speaker System	\$300
Modern	Actiontee 56K PCI Pro Modern	\$40
Keyboard/Mouse	Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro w/ Intellimouse Optical	\$75
Joystick	Saltek Cyborg USB Gold Stick	\$40
Game Pad	Microsoft SideWinder GamePad USB	\$25
	Total	3,112

#### Lean Machine Components

Component	Manufacturer/Model	Prior
Case	Anter SX-63b	\$90
Motherboard	ASUS A7V-E	\$90
CPU	800MHz AMD Quran	\$75
Memory	Crucial 128MB PC133 SDRAM	\$25
Graphics Card	Hercules 3D Prophet 4500	\$150
3.5" Flappy Oriva	Teac	\$25
hard Drive	Maxter DiamondMax VL40 40GB ATA	\$100
CD/DVO-ROM	Greative PG-DVD Encore 12x	\$140
Monitor	Samsung SynoMaster 753 DF 17"	\$175
Sound Card	Creative SoundBlaster Live Value	\$40
Speakers	Altec Lansing ACS96W	\$25
Modern	Actionles 56K PCI Pro Modern	\$50
Keylioard/ Mouse	Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro w/ Intellimouse Optical	\$75
Joyetick	Saitek Cyborg USB Gold Silek	\$40
Game Pad	Microsoft SideWinder GamePail USB	\$25
	Total	\$1,125

<b>Tenchmarks</b>	CGW Power Rig *	- Unerlan Minerana	VB Socilies 6000
activitition us.	DAM LOWEL HIS	Tooler Mailer	NE LAMINEN CORE
CPU:	2GHz Pentam 4	1 4GFtz AtFlon	17GHz Pentium 4
Video card:	ELSA Gladiac gzo	Hercules 3D Prophet III	ASUS GeForces
Quake 3 16-bit:	173.1	152.6	160.1
Quake 3 32-bit:	170.3	150.3	158.2
Unreal Tournament 16-bit:	62.78	65.99	60 02
Expendable 16-bit:	84.76	101.6	72.96
Expendable 32-bit:	84 68	102.2	72 86
Re-Volt 16-bit:	255-3	214.9	228 9
Re-Volt 32-bit:	260.2	215.6	226.6
GameGauge 2.5:*	104.53	102,21	93.78
3D WinMark 2000:	216	200	209
3DMark2001:	6026	5467	5752

## TECH

You've Got Questions, We've Got Answers

It Never Hurts to Ask... Unless I Find You in an Alley Somewhere Could you send me one of the PCs that you tested for a review...it would be much appreciated... I'll give you my mailing address if there's a yes or no, okay? —Alek Nelsen

Why would I need your address if the answer is "no"?

#### Which Laptop Should I Buy?

Love the column but I wish it were a few pages longer. And I know you'd beat Vederman in a fair fight—you're smarter than him. Anyway, I am looking to buy a new laptop, but I have a budget of around \$2,000. I am looking at either a Dell Inspiron (the 8000 series) or a Toshiba Satellite (2805 Series). Which would handle strategy or RTS games better? I'm leaning toward the Inspiron (although I hate mail order and would rather buy something at a store), and after configuring the options I want, I have a choice between a 15-inch UltraXGA TFT Display with an 800MHz Intel P3 or a 14.1 SXGA+ with a 900MHz Intel P3. Should I choose a bigger screen or a faster processor? Also, should I go with the 16MB GeForce2GO and a faster (900MHz) processor or with a 32MB GeForce2GO and a slower (800MHz) processor? —Will Miller

I would forego the 100MHz of processing power for both the bigger screen and more memory (32MB GeForce2GO). I would also make sure to get a machine with at least 256MB of memory

#### The Vede's New Clothes

You have nothing to worry about (from Vederman); after all, he didn't come home from E3 with a bunch of T-shirts like you did.—Daniel A. Homa

You're probably right. I'm willing to bet Jeff Green's first-born child that "the Vede" didn't get a single T-shirt at E3

#### Overclocking Is Kewl!

I currently have a 300MHz Pentium II. I am planning to overclock it to 5000MHz. What should I do? For instance, do you think 3 inches of concrete in the CPU case will deflect the resulting explosion? Should I wear EM shielding? —TFRAkiraoo:

Whatever you do, set up a video camera (a la Jackass) behind a piece of Plexiglas If you videotape the resulting . . . uh . . . situation, we promise to post the video on our Web site and our demo disc

#### I Wish I Had an Extra Thousand Bucks Lying Around

I have an AMD-K62 350MH2 PC with 128MB of SDRAM, 20G8 of hard drive space, a crappy ATI Rage a video card, some generic sound card, a 52X CD-ROM (obviously, I have upgraded it to the max), and about a thousand bucks. First, I would like to know if my computer is okay. I find that I am often depressed when reading the advertisements for the newer computers out there. Should I get a new one right away? Second, if I sell my current computer, how much do you think I should sell it for? Last, if I pool that amount with my thousand bucks, what kind of a system could I get? —Lucan McRandall

For your depression, try Xanax. As for your computer being "okay," that depends on what you want to do with it. Getting a new graphics card (GeForce3) and an additional 128MB of SDRAM would certainly speed things up. But with a thousand bucks to spend, I would completely overhaul the whole shebang. For a thousand bucks you could buy an ASUS A7M266 motherboard, a 1 4GHz Athion, 256MB of DDR RAM, a GeForce3 card, and any power supply and fans you'll need

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  GeForce 2 MX2000
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## GAMER'S EDGE

## Max Payne

Cheat, direct, and see the sites in Max Payne's world By Tom Price

To activate cheat codes in Max Payne, you have to make the console available. Do that by adding "-developer" (make sure you leave a space before the dash!) to the end of the command line that you see when you right-click on the Max Payne icon on your desktop and choose Properties. When you're in the game, hit F12 to bring up the console. Here's a list of available commands for you to enter and what they do:

CODE RESULT

getbullettime ...... Fitl Up When Bullet-Time Out getinfiniteammo .... Unlimited Ammo

getpainkillers ..... Get B Painkillers
noclip ..... No Clipping Mode
noclip\_off ..... No Clipping Mode Off
showfps ..... Show Frame Rate
c\_adhealth (100) .. Add 100 to Health

jump10 .....Jump Higher (set to 20 or 30 for even higher)

following into the console:
maxpayne\_gamemode-->gm\_init(levelname);
Level names are as follows:

You can also skip to any level you want by typing the

part0_level1	part2_level0	part3_level3
part1_level1	part2_level1	part3_level4
part1_level1b	part2_level2	part3_level5
part1_level2	part2_level2b	part3_level5b
part1_level2b	part2_level3	part3_level6
part1_level3	part2_level4	part3_level7
part1_level3b		
part1_level4	part3_level1	end_combat
part1_level5	part3_level2	[secret finale]
part1_level6	part3_level2b	

Another cool trick you can do with Max Payne gives you complete control of the camera. Type "-developerkeys" instead of typing "-developer" on the command line. Once in the game, pause the action with "p" and then hit "c" to take control of the camera. Use the mouse and arrow keys to zoom around the action.

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## Anarchy Online

Getting up and running in Rubi-Ka

by Thierry "Sneakyscooty" Nguyen, level 12 Opifex Agent

hy is it that these MMORPG manuals are useful only as emergency confetti? Even with the best of intentions, ANARCHY ONLINE's manual and tutorial don't tell you enough about the game mechanics for you to do well, I've asked the AO-playing wunderkinds of CGW for tips on subjects ranging from how the hell a starting player can make sense of AO to higher-level tactics. The majority of this guide is slanted toward guiding the newbie player into the gameworld, but there are some tips for players from levels 20 to 40 as well

#### Who Am I?

First things first: You ought to figure out what your goals are. Much like EVERQUEST, the professions in AO can be broken down into their ability to either be a "tank" foffensive damage-soakers) or a "caster" (supports the party via nanoprograms and the like) and by how effective each profession is when it comes to soloing and grouping. While each can theoretically work well either soloing or grouping, there is still an underlying design that dictates which professions excel at either activity.

But because there are so many professions to choose from, you can just go all out and experiment-go ahead, it's not really that hard. The game is flexible enough that you can still have fun with some of the "odder"

breed and profession combinations (Atrox Fixers, Nanotech Enforcers), If you wanna quickly use a character to learn the game mechanics, and then perhaps focus on someone more specialized later on, you can't get much more newbie-friendly than an Adventurer, who is both a decent healer and damage inflicter. Another straightforward class that is good for newbies is the Soldier. simply because all you really need to do is pick up a gun and start shooting things.

#### Life of the Party

if you know you want to be self-sufficient, you can't go wrong with being an Adventurer. Enforcer, Fixer, or Martial Artist. Each of these classes is good for soloing, either because they deal decent damage on their own or can help themselves in a pinch. Enforcers and Martial Artists are pure melee damage dealers and so rely on brute firepower to tear through enemies Ithough the Martial Artist has some healing skills, while the Enforcer relies on heating stimpacks in the shops). Adventurers, as cited earlier, are good at both healing and killing, and Fixers are good in that they, like Soldiers, can shoot things at range, and when the going gets too lough, they can escape to the Grid [l'It explain later].

Because those professions are the best at soloing, the rest of the professions are better suited for grouping. If there is any single

class that is in demand the most, it's the Doctor, There are plenty of people who know how to kill things fast and far away, whether with guns or nanoprograms or servants. What's needed, though, are people who can just plain heat everyone. Adventurers can also fulfill the healer role in any party, but nothing beats a pure Doctor for getting that needed HP poost. Be warned that the Doctor doesn't solo very well, but then again, you ll never be alone, as other gamers will heartily welcome your company.

#### Start It Up!

Character creation itself is painless and selfexplanatory. Note that you'll have to consider which side you choose to start as. At press time, the planned four-year story line hasn't started yet, so I can't comment on how the side you choose will affect the story. Also regarding sides, Omni-Tek employees all start out with a few pieces of basic armor. (including the Omni-Tek shirt), and Neutrals are prohibited from using either. side's specific shops and they lose factionspecific bonuses.

After picking your side, you'll be dropped into the Training Grounds within your starting city. Starting cities for Rebels are Tir and Athen, for Neutrals they're Newland and Borealis, and for Omni-Tek they're Rome or Omni-1. These Training Grounds are small areas with a guard, a guide, a reclaim terminal, a rudimentary shop, and a portal, surrounded by a larger area with "wildlife." By the way, for the purpose of finding buddies, the game randomly assigns you a Training Ground.

Before you go out to hit those leets, take the time to get used to the interface and your stuff. One piece of advice is to have your panels always present on the right side of the screen. On the bottom of your screen, right next to your money count (indicated by the word "CRED") on the left, there should be a button that shows an arrow pointing left with a vertical line next to it. Click on that, and your view area will shift over and there will be a vertical space alongside the right part of the screen. By shifting your view area, all of your interface panels stay there, and you can even use the mouse wheel to scroll up and down them. The small sacrifice in viewing space is compensated for in the handy ability to simply scroll through all of the panels, rather than click on the buttons to open them first. I tend to keep the Wear, Map, Stats, and Friends panels up at all times. See Fig. 1.

Open your inventory by either pressing the "I" key or clicking on INV at the bottom of your screen. Then click on the first icon in

#### **Newland City**





Fig. 1

the upper right ist looks like a little man, and it's right next to the fist) to display your equipment panel. The panel is divided into three tabs, combat items, clothing/armor, and implants. Inventory defaults to combat items when you first open it. Just click on

your weapon, and then click anywhere within the panel, the game will automatically place it in the appropriate slot. Omni-Tek employees can drop their shirt in the same way. See Fig. 2.

You should also have

something resem-

bling a glowstick in your inventory; shift-



Fig. 2

left-click on it and you'll see that it's a nanoprogram, Ingeneral, left-clicking targets things, rightclicking uses things, and shift-left-clicking pulls up a helpful information window about the thing. Now, after you shift-leftclick the nanopro-

gram, scroll down in the resulting window, and you should see that it has certain skill requirements.

#### Mad Skills

Skills in AO work like this: You spend Increase Points (IP) to develop them, but they all rely on your base abilities. That means you can only raise a skill so high before you no longer have the required abilities to use it. However, increasing your base abilities automatically enhances your current skills. Bottom line-Increase your base abilities first and then your skills

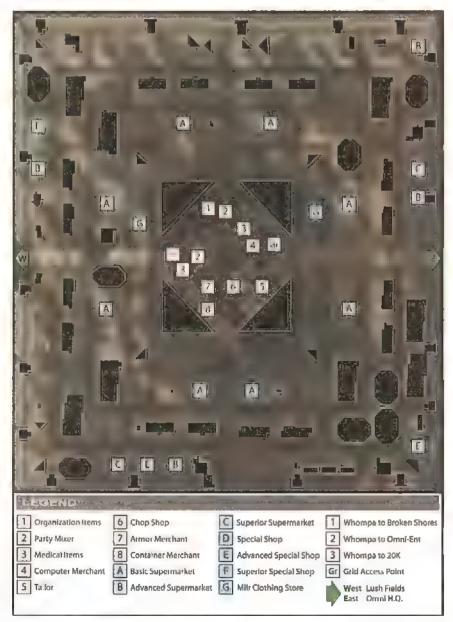
Click on the button marked SKL at the bottom to open up the Skill Tree. Various bullons take

you to the different skill groups, and skills themselves are differentiated by color. Green are the least expensive to raise, while dark blue ones cost the most. Green skills are what your class excels at, so pump IPs into those first and divvy up the rest of your points as you see lit.

A few skills that we found very useful for any class are: Nano Resist (ups your resistance to enemy-activated nanoprograms). Run Speed (to get places faster before you use a car or The Grid, and for running away), both First Aid and Treatment (to use healing equipment), Computer Literacy Ito gain Grid access), and any skills involving initiative (whether melee or ranged, so that you can get the first shot in). And don't fret too much about not having enough points early on because you il periodically get a whole lot more than the traditional 4000 IPs per level, which will allow you to play catch-up with some skills

So put points into your green abilities, green skills, and then the skilts required by your starting nanoprogram. After you click on "Accept," right-click on the nanoprogram to upload it into your memory

#### Omni-1 Trade District



#### **GAMER'S EDGE**



Okay, you got your weapon equipped and your program uploaded, but there's one last thing you should do before going out and lighting things: Customize your shortcut bar. See Fig. 3.

#### Barkeep!

There should be a horizontal bar in the upperleft part of your screen. There are ten slots in this Action Bar, and it should be your main interface for commands because you can place anything from action buttons to items to macros there.

First, open the Commands panel Ictick on the fist icon next to the Wear panel icon), and you'll see a variety of buttons corresponding to things like "Sit," "Stealth," or any special attacks your weapons might have Left-click on a button and then left-click again on the Action Bar to add the button; be sure to open the Nanoprograms

panel (the microchip icon, second from the far right), and put your starting nanoprogram into your Action Bar as well. Then put healing items on the bar.

Note that the Action Bar has a little number on it; clicking on the arrows near the number cycles through different Action Bars. I found myself putting general combat-related commands on the default bar (sitting down for resting, my special attacks, and healing items) and my "downtime" commands in another bar ["buffing" nanoprograms, treatment kits, and so on! While you're at it, target yourself by pressing F1, and then right-click on the nanoprogram you placed in your Action Bar (unless the nanoprogram is an offensive one and not a standard character buff—no need to start hurting yourself)

Finally, before emerging into the wild blue yonder, open the Stats panel—far right, with the bar graphs, next to the hanoprograms button—and look for a green and red bar with the words "DEF" and "AGG" on either end. There should be a marker in the middle, slide the marker all the way to the AGG side. Later on, you might want to fiddle with this slider, but for now, it's simply better to be as aggressive as possible in the newble area, it's often more efficient to deal damage faster and kill enemies than to stay defensive and run away. See Fig. 4.

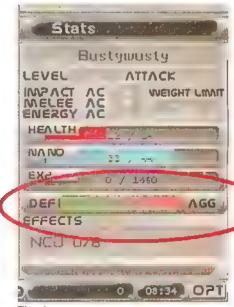
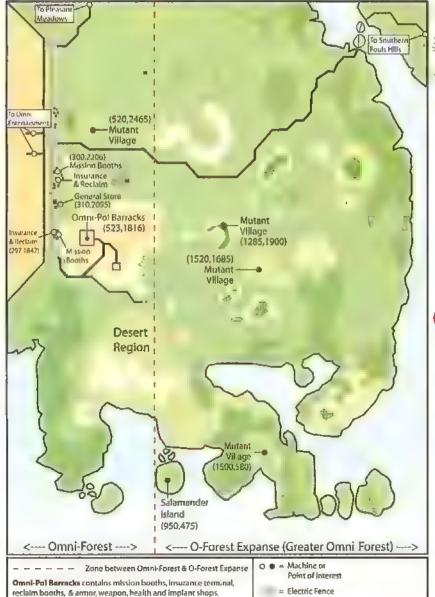


Fig. 4

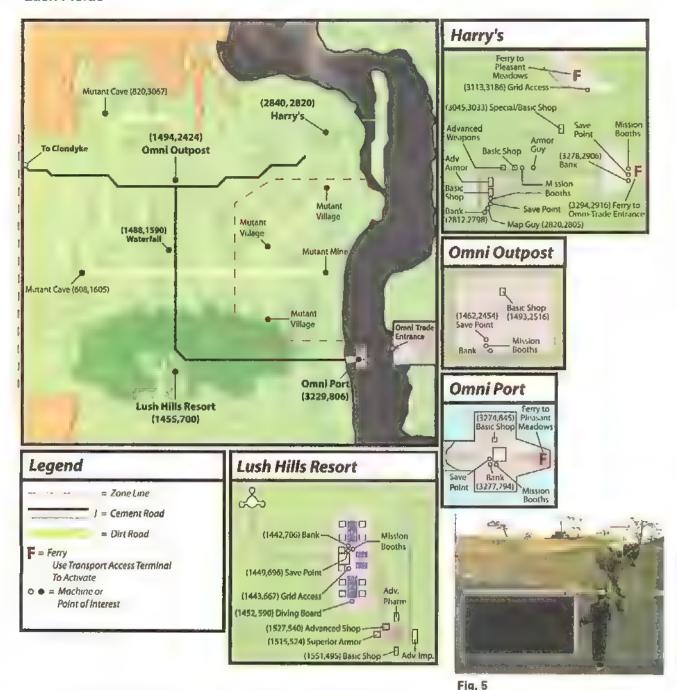
#### Fight With Might

All prepped up, you can now waltz out of the camp and into the general combat area. Target enemies by pressing the Tab key, and look at the names and the colored bar that shows up (both near the top of the screen and above the critter's head). The bar is your basic "con-from EQ—it is a quick indicator of how tough the enemy is. Bright yellow means the monster is on equal footing with you. Orange means the monster is a bit tougher, while

#### Omni Forest



#### **Lush Fields**



red means that it will likely kill you. Green means it's weaker than you, but you'll still get experience points (XP), and gray means that you'll get a whopping 1 XP for killing it. The color bar is a general indicator, but press "T" for a more detailed comparison of the monster and you. You'll get a box called POD with a line and a circle in it. POD stands for "Possibility of Death," and the position of the circle on the line indicates the enemy's level; exact center means it's equal to you, to the left means it's weaker, and to the right means it's stronger. So, unless you have a full party, you probably shouldn't fight something that consired and has its POD rating all the way to the right. See Fig. 5.

By default, "Q" is your initiate-attack command, which is what you'll want to be using most of the time for now, although it initiates only basic combat. Special attacks such as Fling Shots or Bursts need to be activated by their own command button, which you should have placed on your Action Bar eartier As in EQ, combat is auto-attack based, so all you have to do is wait for it to resolve or use your special attacks when they become available See Fig. 6.

Afterward, you just need to right-click on the monster's corpse to loot it. If there are items on it, left-click on them to automatically add them to your inventory. If you need to heal yourself, sit down first ["X" by default], target



Fig. 6

### Old Athens 5 5 3 A 4 5 D \$ 000 **(** D 14 13 10

- Reclaim Booth
- Cell Scanner
- Mission Terminal
- **Basic Shop Terminal**
- Whom-Pa to Newland
- Whom-Pa to Avalon
- Whom-Pa to Broken Shore
- Apartment #
- Party Mixer
- Basic Quality Pharmacist
- **Basic Supermarket** 
  - Advanced Supermarket
- Superior Supermarket
- (Special) Advanced Supermarket
- (Special) Superlor Supermarket
- Organization Items Merchant
- Food Provider
- Computer Merchant
- Container Supplier
- Clan Tailor
- Basic Quality Armorer
- Clan Miir Clothing
- Zone To Athen Shire Zone To Aegean

yourself, and right-click on the treatment kit lit looks like a first aid kit) to get a big HP boost; save the heat stim for when you're actively fighting something, as the treatment kit can be used only when you're sitting down and not in combat.

Keep fighting and tooting until you get to level 4, the minimum requirement for leaving the Training Grounds.

The last thing you need to learn before you leave is how to work a mission.

#### Missionary Style

When you walk through the portal near the Guide, you II pop into a second part of the Training Grounds Here, you'll see an Insurance Terminal, a Mission Terminal, a Bank, a Surgical Clinic (do not right-click on it by accident, as it costs 300 credits and is used only (or inserting implants), and the exit to the city proper. You'll need either 1,000 credits or to be at level 4 before you can enter the city. So before going out, go right to the Mission Terminal, Right-click on it. For now just hit "generate mission," shift-click on the resulting mission to learn about it, and hit "accept" after you've read the description

After accepting the mission, you need to open the Mission panel the Micon, fourth from the left). Put your cursor over the mission icon, and hold down the right mouse button, three new buttons should pop up. Rightight the one that looks like an X on a grid and that will upload the mission coordinates to your map (which should

already be open). Now, just find the particular mission building. and go on in.

Later on, you can customize mission settings and choose from a pool of different mission types. The difficulty slider adjusts the levels of the enemies and the loot acquired Straight in the middle means enemies tend to be equal to you, and the loot is around your level. Sliding the bar between Easy and the default gives you enemies that con green and

items that are about three

levels below you. Consequently, sliding the bar to Hard gives you enemies that con around orange, but the loot is damn good The missions themselves are pretty straight forward, and the only thing to note is that missions that require you to retrieve an item also want you to return said item back to the Mission Terminal you got the mission from

Only then will you get your reward. The other mission types automatically give you the reward whenever you complete your objectives. Finally, you might want to think about doing missions that ask you simply to find an item, in those missions, you get both

> the item you find and the mission reward See Fig. 7.



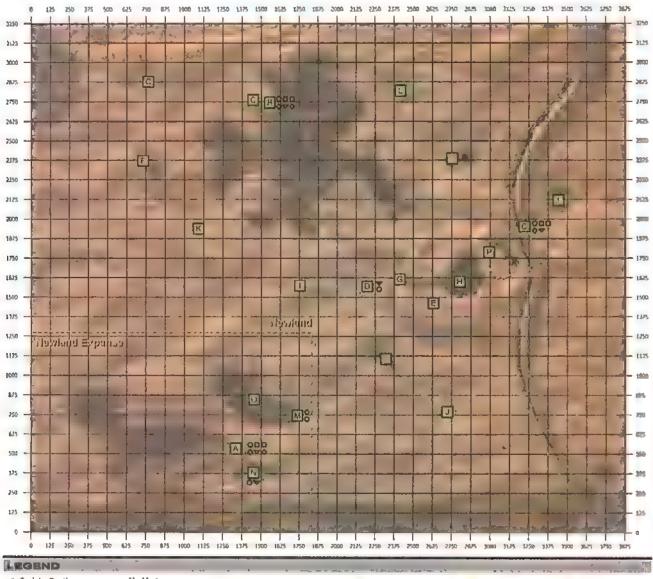
Before sending you off to explore the world on your own, we should get into what is arguably the heart of AO. killing things with other people. Aspects like team communication and Friends lists initially feel quirky to work with, but after you get used to them, you'll appreciate how streamlined they are.

For one thing, the process of adding someone to your Friends list is different than the typical "/friend (name)" process. You'll need to have received a /tell from your friend earlier If you open up your Friends panel (the icon with the exclamation point, third from the right], you'll see three sections with a slew of names. The bottom section, indicated by a question mark,



Fig. 7

#### Newland Playfield



- Reclaim Booth
- Cell Scanner
- Mission Terminal
- B Bank
- Shop/Vendor
- Grid Access
- N Mort
- Zone 25% Gas (PVP)
- Varment Woods Plains of Salt Aegean/Athen Shire
- B Meetmedere

A Newland City

- Clan Millitary Com Station Stoffs Trading Outpost
- E Rhinoman Scout Camp
- (F) Rhinoman Camp Rhinoman Valley
- H Rhinoman Village
- II Cases **5**1
  - Toxoc Lake
- **Guarded Fortress** Speceship Włeck
- N Trading Outpost
- Green Valley T Spawn point

is filled with "potentials." Anyone you've had /tell conversations with will be put here; the icons next to the name in this list indicate whether that person is online. What you need to do here is highlight the name of your friend and hold down the right mouse button again. Click on the Accept button that pops up. The middle section, with the disconnected plugs, is a list of your friends who aren't online. Any of your buddles who is will be moved to the top section, indicated by the connected plug.

To team up with someone for a party, you'll first target the person and open the Team panel (the three heads icon, right in the middle between the map and the mission icons). There, you'll see the option to invite

the person selected; if someone's recruiting you, that same panel displays the option to accept or decline the invitation. When you're in a team, group-talking is a matter of opening the Friends panel again. Look at the bottom of the Friends panel and you should

see two options. Vicinity and Team Whichever one is in red is what the chat function defaults to So, if you don't want to type "/group" every time you want to say something to the team as a whole, you just click on Team to make it the default output channel. That way, you can type in whatever you have to say, and only your fellow teamates will see it. See Flg. 8.

Another team consideration is sticking together. Target someone on your team (usually the guy who knows where he's going) and type "/follow." You'll automatically follow whatever you've targeted. Only a movement key will break you out of following mode, so you can still

do stuff like chat around, fiddle with your inventory, or even move your camera. Also, use /follow on a targeted enemy to make a beeline toward it, or if your team is in the same map but you've managed to get lost, click on a team member's name in the Team panel and then /follow to find your way again.



Fig. 8

#### GAMER'S EDGE

Also, it's a set convention that the team leader should type "/team loot alpha" in order to set looting to alphabetical order so everyone gets a fair chance at the whole pie. Then again, you could make for a massive



Fig. 5

looting free-for-all by typing in "/team toot all" to let anyone who touches the body first be the looter.

Finally, the universal /loc command returns. Typing that in spits out a set of coordinates, which is useful for finding people. What's also worth remembering is that by default F9 is mapped to the coordinates command, so just slap F9 the next time someone asks for your /loc.

The tast few commands are good examples of how to create and use macros. Macros are basically hot-button versions of commands. Just type in "/macro [macroname] [command]" and you'll create a button to be placed on your Action Bar. Clicking on the button automatically performs whatever action you assigned to the macro. So, if you type in "/macro Follow /follow" you'll get a button called "Follow" and clicking on the button follows your target, so you don't have to type it in every time. Check out sites that list the commands, and learn to make your own macros. See Fig. 9.

Alright, that should be enough to get you up and running and knowing what the heck to do out there. Keep this article around—we have a few more tips for when you get up into the 20s and beyond. Now, have fun zipping around Rubi-Ka, and watch out for those cannons at Clondyke.



### Mid-Level Strategies

by Andrew "Mandrew" Burwell, level 41 Nanotech Nanomage

As you start getting into the teen levels you it find it more and more difficult to make money, rise in level, and get better items unless you start adventuring some. Here are some tips on how you can achieve those goals.



GRID: Have you over seen those grid terminals and wondered what they were? The Grid is a godsend in the world of PMIORPO. It allowing that the world of PMIORPO. It allowing that the world of the AO universe in just seconds. So how in the heart of you use it? The Grid is a quites a minimum of 100 points into your computer Literacy, or Comp Lit, skill. At about level 15, start pumping points into it. You can get to 100 points quicker by purchasing a Comp Lit buff spell at the general store in the Nano section). Having Grid access will open up a whole new world for you. You'll finally get to venture out of that darn area you've been in since level 4. You can now do missions with giant XP or credit rewards Buff in prepare the win it you! I finally those other areas—make one wrong turn and you can end up in enemy territory or areas with monsters that will take you out with one hit. There is a sort of safety net: Some areas will require 150 to 200 in Comp Lit to allow you to grid to them.

HUNTING GROUNDS: So you've hit level 20, and you have to start venturing out farther and farther to get to mobs that ill give you XP. Below you'll find some of the best frunting grounds for levels 20 to 45. These hunting grounds are not for the weak, so make sure you're in a group and you have a good healer with you.

#### LEVELS 20-30:

- Omni Forest Expanse (1546x615)
- Mulants and Elebeline epors

#### LEVELS 30-35:

- ☐ Omnf Forest Expanse Mystic Swamp Circle (2166x2395)
- Breillabn Bippers

#### LEVELS 35-40

- Lush Hills (1712x976)
- Mutants

#### LEVELS 40-45:

- Galaway-Poole [1426x1573]
- ■Manieze

CARS: If you're not a class with Grid access. or a speed buff, you'll want to get a car-Traveling the expanse of Rubi-Ka can be rustrating at times—like when you get vourself a mission that's light years away with your current run speed, or you have to cross areas so dangerous that you could be killed with one swipe of a monster's arm. A car, and only a car, can get you past these seemingly impassable perits. Pumping a few IPs into your ground vehicle stat and purchasing a low-level car (around 30) with instantly doubte your run speed. You'll be able to fly right past the fastest critters and traverse vast distances in little time Mission experience and credits will start flying in as you travel to the farthest reaches of the land. It's also a fantastic getaway device when you're grouping against creatures many levels above you

map upgrades, upgrading your map might seem useless at first, but once you have the upgrades you'll see why they reso difficult to live without. Not all map upgrades are useful, but here's what you should go for if you have the extra cash the Monsters upgrade will be really nelpful for grouping, as you will be the first to detect enemy mobs. When you start tighting the Manteze you'll thank your tucky stars that you can see all 20 of them before you venture into their area. It's also great for mission runs into dangerous areas. The ability to detect the enemy mobs will help tremendously in avoiding them.

The second upgrade to consider purchasing would be the People upgrade. While not as useful as the Monsters upgrade, the People upgrade allows you to see anyone within the range of your map. It also highlights your group members—this is really handy when grouping if you lose sight of your team. Instead of running around in circles until they come into range, look on your map and head to the nearest fellow.

You can also purchase the Machine locator or Directional Arrow. They grow less useful as you become familiar with different area. but are hand, at the beginning. I you re throwing points into your map reading skills to purchase maps for different areas, and you have some extracredits, you might as well spring for the upgrade. Once you get really high level, and you start to enter the Clan and OmniTek areas, you'll want to purchase the Side map upgrade so you can see which alliances people have. This is especially useful for PKers.

### EASTER EGG

### GAME: Blizzard Mania

In the spirit of this month's feature story. here's a run of Easter eggs for many of Blizzard's past games. The early WARCRAFT games mainly had the Easter egg everyone knows about-you just clicked on any unit multiple times to hear goofy sayings.

WARCRAFT II's expansion, THROUGH THE DARK PORTAL, started the whole Blizzard habit of hiding songs in the games. To get the secret song, you just have to press Enterto get the text box, and type in "disco-Pressing Enter again triggers the secret disco sono.

STARCRAFT continues this tradition with the key phrase being "Radio Free Zerg." Rather than disco, this one is steeped in techno. Also, if you wait long enough in the first

Terran mission, a recipe for Lemon Chicken should pop up.

The DIABLO games have had weirder Easter eggs. One involves hidden text in the splash screens. The Autorun menu for DIABLE has words hidden in the horns You first need to capture the screen (hit Print Scrn near the top of your keyboard), paste the screen into an image editor, and start filling the area around Diablo's head/horns, You should uncover messages advising you to buy the WARCRAFT games

DIADLO II went all-out by having an entire secret level. Everyone just made up the story about the Cow Level in DIABLO, with outrageous requirements like clicking on a cow a thousand times and then fighting Divided by Blizzard went so far as to put a Secret Cow Level in Diagoo II.

To access it, you need to have finished the game at least once [kill either Diablo or Bhaal, depending on whether you're playing the original game or the expansion); then go back to Act One on the same difficulty level. Put Wirt's Leg and a scroll of Town Portal in the Horadric Cube, and execute the recipe while standing in the Rogue Encampment. Bada-bing, now light some cows and take on the Cow King too.

Oh yeah, click on all four corners of the screen in DIABLO It's opening menu and then type, one at a time and in this order (but without the commas): t, h, i, s, i, s, j, u, s, t, a, b, a, d, j, o, k, e. This will unlock the hidden build of WARCRAFT III. And if you click on the dancing ore in WARCRAFT III, you'll further unlock a secret version of WORLD OF WARCRAFT

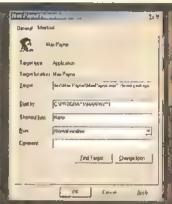
### Max Payne

in Act 3: Level 4 (the garage), there is an Easter egg featuring members of MAX PAYNE'S production team and some other surprises. After the opening cut-scene ends, take out the four guys that the car has dropped off. Before entering the garage on the right, face the garage and look just to the right of the opening. There are three barrels (two of them are stacked up) and an A/C unit coming out of the wall. Jump from one to another to reach the garage roof. You'll now be faring a little shack on the root, with a door-shaped section painted slightly lighter than the rest; shoot this with any weapon and it will fall away, leading to a room with a small grate in the floor. Stand on the grate, and you will fall into a room with a dead hostage, a sniper rifte and ammo, and a radio fine may be conversation between members of the production team with a bit of humor at the

In the rooftop chase sequence, you can get to a room that has a poster of Sounier OF FORTUNE II and some other useful

In Chapter 3 when you start on the roof of the multistory car park, you can jump on the barrels and then onto the roof near the exit ramp. Shoot the peculiar, looking metal wall and it will collapse. Then go through the opening and drop through a nearby vent in the floor, and you'll and up in a small room, You'll find a sniper rifle and some ammo and a radio. "Use" the radio for some laughs

When you walk in on the bank robbery, you can shoot the wailing siren to stop it. Do this and Max will thank you. When you find the plane on the manor



level, if you "use" it Max will play the title theme. Shoot the lid support out to drop the lid and then try playing the plane

When you find the drum kit in the Ragna Rock bar, "use" it to play some beats. You can also get the guitar on the floor to squeat, and if you use the stage microphones, Max will say: "Karaoke was never my thing.

in Chapter to Level 3 you can find the handlwork of Buffy the Vempire Slayer From Muerte's Room, 313, turn right when you exit the room. At the end of the hallway; turn left and you will see a bathroom on the left side and a wooden door that is partially broken on the right side Using any weapon, break through the word. In through the room until you get to the broken window. So through the window onto the ledge and follow the blood on the ledge. You will come to another boarded-up doorway that is partially broken. Again using any weapon. break the deight Inside the moneyou will find a body with a stake in it and "Buff" written on the door

After you leave the inner circle and get to the main guy's office, you pick up the

tape. Two rooms after that is his inner office: Shoot the painting off the wall and you'll find a button. Push it, and the couch rises up behind you, exposing a staircase. Go down and you'll find a big-screen TV that will play a parody of a Star Trek episode. In the next room is a bed with chains on it and a closet full of bondage

In the level where you're chasing Gognitti across the rooftops, after bailing from the rrain, work your way up to where you reach the basketball court. After you ve killed the guys, look for a pit-like depression barred off by a chain-link ence with a light over it ion the left when you liest approach the court). There is a Desert Eagle at the bottom. Open up the console and turn on god mode ljust in case) and type: jumpill: When you pressioner use the movement key to get Maxon the other side of the fence and into the pit. Go through the door on the left and walk down. You'll find a room full of goodles, and a poster that says "Doperish Lives." The Dopefish is originally from COMMANDER KEEN 4 in the Well of Wishes. level and has appeared in several other games, including QUAKE

PART II

### Baldur's Gate II: Throne Of Bhaal

### Conquer the Watcher's Keep by Thierry Nguyen

There's one thing you can immediately take away from Bioware's statement, "Throne OF BHAAL contains our best dungeon ever": It's going to be damn hard.

Durlag's Tower, the last massive expansion dungeon they did, was a trap-filled monstrosity, and the closest BGII had to a sprawling dungeon was the Asylum. With Watcher's Keep, Bioware pulls out

att the stops on riddles, puzzles, and ridiculously powerful enemies. Last month, you got some help from Bioware on the overall expansion. This time we're giving you maps of the whole place, along with write-ups on what to expect and how to get through particular challenges within Watcher's Keep.

Special thanks go to Bloware for providing

the maps and to Desslock for his GameGuide, which served as a valuable resource when we were researching this piece. If you want to know absolutely everything there is to know about both Watcher's Keep and the rest of Throne Of Braal, you should check out his guide at http://gamespot.com/gamespot/guides/pc/bg2\_expansion/index.html.

Quest is initiated here; this is where the "shop" will be, and anytime you need to talk to the Knights of Helm, go back here. This is also the entrance to Watcher's Keep.

Direct exit from Level TWO: Elemental Laboratory Level

Direct exit from Level Three: Teleportation Maze

Direct exit from Level Five: The Final Seal

Direct exit from Level Four: The Machine of Lum The Mad

Direct exit from The Imprisoned One

Go here to travel to the top of the Keep automatically.

This is where you start.





The beginning level of Watcher's Keep is pretty straightforward. You just need to find some items, give them to the right people, and perform a ritual to open the next part of the dungeon. There are several undead and spiders here, so use your claric's Turn Undead to take care of the undead, and everyone else can beat on the spiders. Tralls roam about as well,

so expect to use flame or acid-based spells/equipment.



This is where you'll find the tinderbox and the suppers two key items that will help you obtain the rest of the ritual items.





Ehis lawhere you'll find the bell too the ritual it is also a nice place to take a breather, since there isn't anything here to initially attack you.



Use the tinderbox on the kitchen hearth right here, and you'll help the Archivist spirit out, and the littell you how to appease the Priest spirit. The cardle is in this room as well



Bring the stippers here, and the Priest will allow you to obtain the ritual text in the sarcophagus. It also helps to have picked up the wardstones scattered around this level as they will prevent the two golerns from attacking you.



This is where you will perform the ritual. Drop the bell and the candle in, and you'll get hit by the first statue wave. Don't worry, it's only a mage and a druid. But get ready, because after you complete the ritual, the rest of the statues come alive. We're talking a mage, an archer, and several melee lighters with good weapons [Foebane, a +3 bastard sword and Usonon's Blade, a +4 ninja-to are used here]. The ritual itself goes: Ring the bell, ring it again, light the candle, open and read the book, and then ring the belt one last time.

### Elemental Laboratory

This is also a straightforward level, if you follow everyone's advice. First, you pretty much have to make a deal with the Chromatic Demon in order to progress at all. Then, when you enter the Fire

Mage's study, you'll run into an imp who will give you further guidance. Basically, you'll start from the Fire Mage's study and go cleckwise, following the directions found in each mage's study and grabbing elemental you'll be following detail both how to progress past the labs of the other mages and how to react to the fight you'll be having before you can go down any further.



There won't be any enemies in the Air Laboratory mutuly, I be not for in the Air Laboratory of the Common of the C



Don't barge in here too quickly, because this ab is fillen with poison gas. Instead take a cue from the Air Mage's note. Make your way, a ound the lab and open the Poison. Mage's library, kill all the spiders in there, and open the other door into the

Roison wab. With both doors open an back to the AT Laborators with the fencial bill from and their go anto the Poison Lab. Now that the poison gas is gone, you can kill the Slimes and the Snake (which

has the scepter!





Before going here, manipulate the doors as described in the Poison Mage's notes. Duce the proper doors are open, the gas from the Poison Laboratory will waft into the ice Laboratory. Stay outside of the ice Laboratory; not only is there poison, but the cold will slow your characters down. Live the poisoned ice pritters out of the lab and quickly dispatch them. The loc Golem is the scepter-carrier here.



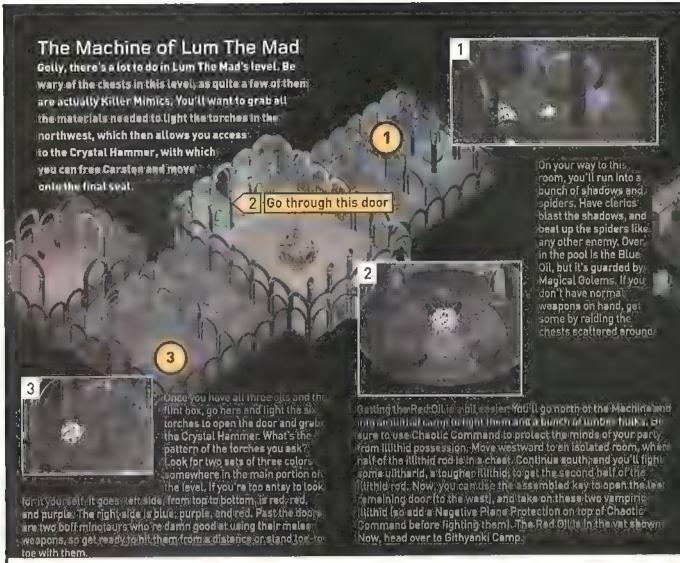
Altright shartab, and the most time consuming. Have someone laster than usual (Boots of Speed or Hastad) run into the lab. There is a Fire Giant, and typically two Oreater File Elementals in the lab; ignore the big guy, and have the two flaming adjots follow you into the lice Laboratory—the) will die instantly. After four of these fools have been dispatched, then you can go in, wall on the Fire Giant himself, and grab the last scepter from his corpse. Bet ready for the fight shear and remember all the hints that the mages left behind

### The Teleportation Maze

There's no traditional map here, because this is the funkiest part of the whole dungeon. Rather than plot out a landscape, you teleport from room to room, and each has its own minimap. A larger map would be useless, because it all depends on which portal you take. The thing to do here is translate the directions in the Madman's Journal and use those to "correctly" navigate the maze.



1. Sure, task to the Madman, piller his journal (watch out for the trap in his tent), and be or your it erry way. If you rela goody two-shoes, you can use one of your clerics to cast Heal on him to help him recover from his yek-induced madness. Collect the scopter, and start your search for the three jownls. 2. Stightly easier to deal with, but still no slouch, is Tanazzar and his posse of cornugon, imps, an erinyes, and a velithuu. If you ded ded to kill the first group, you can present the demon's heart to this guy, and not only do you get your required jewel, you also get the Thieve's Hood, which can be enhanced by Cespenar later on: 3. There are two groups of demons, and you within note this one institled by Ka'rashur! You can either fight them (hard to do, since there significantly a residual station in for good measure) or bargain to kit, the second group of demons come back, and give Kairashur Tahazzar's heart for safe passage. But I you're a paladin, these guys are impresely, so you have to vanguish them rather than bargain with them. Not only do you have to get the leader's heart, you also have to get the jewel he has on him. 4. Now, you can either play Aesgareth's game involving the Deck Of Many Things to get the last scepter jewel, or you can simply beat it out of him and his tiefling pals (and get the Deck for yourself).





pop on in

order: 2, 3, 1

these doors

### The Machine of Lum The Mad: Githyanki Camp

This little offshoot isn't that hard actually and is noteworthy mainly for being a bridge lietween two moderately powerful enemies: Saladrex the red dragon and a Demilich. The Demilich's loot is mainly a bunch of gold and the Dagger Of The Stor (+4). The entrance to the Demilich's tomb is west of the dragon book.



The very first room that you waltz into in the Githyanki Camp will have the flint and linear newded to link the lamps. The githyanki here aren't too trad, probably because you're quite powerful by the time you get around to exploring Watcher's Keep.



You have to grab the Purple Oll from this pool, but he sure to scour the area for neat look such as Angurvadal (+4 long sword with neat AC-raducing side effects) and Montfolios Clasp. Also, this is where you would find the stairs down to Saladrex. You can leave him, or fight him to get the Staff Of The Ram (+4):



Toget this key collections or be affect to to the fourth orb will be the key to put in the pillar Every time you collect an orb, you light with reference on the following one or bottom and increasing mainfield, Greater Earth Elementals, and beholders. Red orbs give you hobgotins, kua-toa, troils and wolfweres. Blue orbs give you more powerful mages [pictured here]. Purple orbs give you keletal warriors shades, vampires, and lights.



This minigame is prefity, straight forward. Factorie to lightius bacouseverything and anything you run into Ignore the fountain when you find it as it will poison you lighen every chestyou can souther you can soughealting potions, magic bracers, and a wand of magic missile. When you find the Gibberling Scroll, use it to vaporize the globerling instantly. Finally, go face the mummy with your wand and magic bracers autopped.



As yournlock patts of the PinabSeal you'll face more and more powerful apponence. The northwest additional programs of the northwest additional programs. In portheast lock summons intendimensional quardians led by high-level mage autumath Ritampi (take him out ASAP), bringly the last seal will summon faming skulls and suitch named Azamante. Then, you just need to go in and contront the impresoned One. How you to this is up to you, but a couple of hints I from want good XP and the most moral decision the attricts, and when you gets change, contront someone with the muth and then for our someone.

### ANACHRONOX

In The Television of Manustranes by Elliott Chin

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### Master Worldskills

These master worldskills aren't vital to finishing the game, but they do tet you pick up hidden and powerful objects, such as excellent weapons, new MysTech, and collectibles like TACOs. In most cases, you'll want to try to acquire these skills as soon as possible. since some of the relevant individuals might not be available or willing to help after a certain plot point [warning: spoiler follows]when Detta takes over Anachronox lend sporter), For instance, if you visit Ambassador Ashdown after that, he won't upgrade Democratus' tractor beam worldskill lalthough he does give you a rice consolation prize). You'll have to visit him before this event if you want to gain tractor beam mastery

the Red Light District on Sender Station. Once you finish this last quest, he'll give you a Master Lockpick tool. You don't need to equip it. At first glance, it might not look tike your skill has been upgraded when you next encounter a 10-second lock. However, you'll notice a new botton on the screen Clicking on it will reset the timer, and there is no limit to how often you can click on it. Thus, you now have untimited time to fin is picking locks, as long as you keep resetting the limer.

### Grumpos: Master Yammer

After you return from Sunder, and MysTech has been awakened, you must enter the Sender Station terminal. Waiting at terminal 2 is a red-robed mank from Hephaestus

### Dr. Rho: Master Analyze

Dr. Rho Bowman's master worldskill can be acquired after you return to Sender Station from Sunder. Go back to the Penthouse Suites where you set up the scientist and the lonely woman Isee Find Two Tickets to Sunder, belowl. They'll still be there. Talk to the scientist, who will kindly teach Dr. Rho how to improve her analyzing skills. After you talk to him, you'll have upgraded to Master Analyze.

### Stiletto Anyway: Master Loonie Toss

Strictio can acquire her master skill after the fight against Chaos' forces on Limbus. Go into the City of Sesostris, There's a fountain, next to which is a wise alien named



At the very least, acquire Master Lockpick. Boots can find it by helping Ruhk on all his quests.



Visit this monk in terminal 2 of Sender Station and he'll upgrade your Yammer skill to master level.



Infantine the robot will teach PAL the art of Master Comptatk, Find him at the Anachronox Tours area.



When Dr. Rho returns from Sunder and speaks to Dr Brywelle, she'll master her Analyze worldskill.



The planet Democratus can gain his Master Tractor skill in Frank's Flophouse in Anachronox.

### Siy Boots: Master Lockpick

In order to get Boots' Master Lockpick skill, you need to find Ruhk and complete all his quests. Ruhk is first found in the Anachronox Tours area, at the crime scene. He'll give you four quests, spaced throughout the game. The final one is acquired in named Brother Gnosticus. Talk to him, and he'll telt you he won't sell you any of his MysTech, no matter what you say That's your cue to use Grumpos Yammer You'll fail but the monk will offer to swap techniques with you. Say yes, and he will teach you new yammering skills, thus upgrading your worldskill to Master Yammer.

Thennikendonorr. If you enter the city from the valley, the fountain is located beyond sand to the left of the third door as you move deeper into the city. The fountain is close to the tunnel leading up to the top of the mountain and the giant cannon. Talk to Thennikendonorr and he II teach Stiletto the Master Loonie Toss worldskill.

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upervillain Rictu

### PAL-18: Master Comptalk

To acquire PAL's master skill, you need to return to Anachronox and visit Anachronox Tours. Inside, near the entrance fin fact, right after you zone into Anachronox Tours), you'll see a two-legged robot with what looks like a baby floating in its head. This robot is named Infantine, and if you have PAL talk to him enough, he will teach you the Master Comptalk skill.

### Democratus: Master Tractor Beam

You can get Democratus' master worldskill by visiting Anachronox and entering Frank's Flophouse. Standing by the counter is a Democratan named Ambassador Ashdown, who has been traveling the universe, learning about other forms of government. Talk to him and he will teach you new ways to govern, thus giving you the Master Tractor.

### Paco "El Puno" Estrella: Master Ragemight

To acquire Paco's Master Ragemight worldskill, you must return to Hephaestus. Go toward the entertainment district, but instead



Stiletto's worldskill, while not very useful, is easy to upgrade. Do so in the City of Sesoslris.



El Puno's ragemight skill can be upgraded by visiting old flame Mrs. Invisiblus on Hephaestus.

of going down the stairs at the sign to the district, go up. Take a right, and have Boots pick the lock on the second door. Once you get through, you'll find a transparent woman standing to the left of the door in the kitchen. Her name is Mrs. Invisiblus, but during her adventuring days she was a superheroine who had a fling with Paco. Have Paco talk to her and she'll teach him to control his anger, upgrading his Ragemight to master status.

### Finding Two Tickets to Sunder

You can find three tickets on Sender Station, even though you only need two. The first ticket is fairly easy to get. There's a man standing in the shadows to the right of the Sender Station Commons door when you enter the Commons from the Terminal. He can tell you how to get one ticket, which involves just chasing down NPCs in the area until you finally get a ticket. For the other two, you can either yammer the whitecoated scientist in the SenDormitory lafter which he'll give you the ticket just to get rid of youl or you can hook up two lonely people. In the Penthouse Suites, there's a scientist about to leave for Sunder who is starting to guestion his devotion to science. He wants to experience love instead of chasing theories. In the Commons area, watching the clown act, is a woman who is looking for a man with a brain. Talking to them won't be enough, though. On a lable near the scientist is a single rose; take it to the woman, and she'll come running to the scientist. When they meet, the scientist will thank you and give you his ticket to Sunder. If you acquire your second ticket this way, you'll also be able to acquire Rho's master skill.

### Red Light District Entrance

There's a bug in the entrance to the Red Light District in Sender Station that could throw you for a loop if you aren't careful. After Dr. Rho fixes the burned-out controls for the locked door leading to the Red Light District, do not manipulate the controls twice. This resets the chain-link door and makes it so that the door cannot be opened from the inside. So be careful to touch the door control only once. Otherwise, you'tlineed to restart from a previously saved game prior to entering the Red Light District.

### Virulent Hive

The Hive minigame is a necessary evil or a refreshing diversion, depending on your taste for rail shooters. Those not used to rail shooters should note that if you find yourself stuck because you've run out of ammo, you can reload by clicking on the ammo icon at the bottom left of the screen

### Get More Save Game Slots

Anachronox doesn't have nearly enough save game stots, but you can always make more. Enable the console by pressing [alt]+[shift]+[F10]. Then, call down the console by hitting the [-] key. When the console appears, type "savegame n," where "n" is a number from 1000 to 9999 Inumbers below 1000 aren't usable]. To load those save games, type "loadgame n," with n being the number of the save game slot. This tip was on PlanetAnachronox com, a good spot to look for more clues if you're stuck.



 To unlock the Red Door, you need to arrange the objects in the order in which they first appeared to you, Each object represents one supervillain HQ, which makes this puzzle easy to solve. For example, in the El Pintos room, there is a computer terminal displaying a hologram of an object. El Pintos are represented by this hologram and vice versa In each of the other five supervillain HO rooms there is a terminal and a corresponding hologram of an object. Note the order in which you encounter these objects, from first to last. When you reach the Green Room, simply arrange the objects according to the order in which you encountered their representative supervillain.



The first puzzle in the villainship is the Red Door, Take note of your travel route to the door when it comes time to solve the puzzle.

The Green Door is similar, but instead of arranging objects, you arrange supervillains. Remember which object represents which supervillain from the previous puzzle because you'll need that pattern. But the order in which you arrange them isn't as straightforward this time. Don't put them in the order in which you find them, as in the previous puzzle, instead, click on the camera link at the bottom of the puzzle to get a view of the original holo-projector in the hangar control room. The projector cycles through the five objects in a specific order. Each time, it starts with the same object. and goes through the other four objects. one at a time. Copy that order for arranging the supervillains. If you forget which objects represent which supervillains, go back to their HQ rooms and see which objects are displayed on their computer terminals. Once you arrange the supervillains in the order shown through the camera link, you'll unlock the Green Door



The Green Door requires you to arrange viltains instead of objects.

### MechCommander 2

It's a mad, mad mechworld

by Bruce Geryk

Success in MECHCOMMANDER 2 begins with good mech design. This isn't as important in the solo campaign, where it's perfectly reasonable to complete the whole thing with stock mechs and no modifications. But when it comes to multiplayer, it's a different story entirely. Tweaking mech designs is half the fun of playing BattleTech-based games, and it's a bit of a shame that there isn't a straight solo skirmish mode to test your designs against the computer Human opponents are better, though, so if you're looking to join the fray either online or on a LAN, here are some tips to give you an edge (just hide this issue from your friends)

Much of the strategy in multiplayer MECH-COMMANDER 2 is based on the kind of game you're playing and the map you're using, so it's impossible to talk about the utilimate design because that depends heavily on the mission you're supposed to accomptish Nevertheless, when it comes to weapon selection, there are general rules to consider Weapons in the game fall into several categories.

#### **Energy weapons**

Pros: No ammo required; low space Cons: High heat requirements; big weapons are underpowered

The biggest advantage to energy weapons becomes no advantage at all if you're playing with Unlimited Ammo. With that option, the balance swings toward missiles and projectile weapons. Still, energy weapons offer decent firepower and take up very little space. The basic PPC is a particularly good combination of space, cost, and heat

One thing that shouldn't be overlooked in some energy weapons is their high rate of fire. The pulse lasers may seem under powered due to their limited damage per shot, but multiply their damage by their high rate of fire, and their value improves drastically. Conversely, the Clan Heavy Large Laser seems like it packs a wallop, but for the price and the heat capacity it's almost certainly not worth it. This kind of efficiency analysis should be the basis for all of your weapon selections.

### Projectile weapons

Pros: Low heat, good bang for the buck Cons. Ammo requirements; take up lots of space

Projectile weapons are a good value for the money, and if you he playing with Untimited Ammo they become a whole lot better. Unfortunately, they take up far more space than even the largest energy weapons. Also, aside from the Gauss family, there aren't a lot of good long-range projectile weapons. There is a general rule about weapons in this game. Of the different versions of a weapon.



Swapping out machine guns in favor of lasers is generally a good idea.

the biggest one is usually the least useful. The perfect example of this is the Long Tom It's by far the most powerful and most expensive weapon in the game, it's also probably the most usetess. A Gauss Rifle costs almost half as much, does almost as much damage, and takes up less space. And it costs 1/20<sup>th</sup> as much heat!

On the other end of the scale, there are the Machine Gun Arrays. These are totally useless and should be avoided. Some players use them to fill in the odd stot on a mech that can't fit anything else Isince they use no heat!, but this is about the limit of their utility.

Much of mech design is about finding the right tradeoif of price for effectiveness when you have a limited budget. The Light Gauss costs less than half the price of a Gauss Rifle, but is better than "half as good." Since you also save two spaces, combining the Light Gauss with a large energy weapon like a Large Pulse Laser is a better use of money and space than the bigger Gauss guns, unless you re really worried about heat

Missiles
Pros: Low space, larget lock-on, cheap

Cons. You run out of them; they blow up

Missiles are excellent for hilly terrain, which can block your line of fire, because they can follow an enemy unit even if it ducks behind cover. They don't do that much damage by themselves, though, so concentrated volleys from multiple mechs should be the order of the day.

The "biggest-is-worst" rule here is perfectly demonstrated by the Thunderbolt Missile White it's one mean son-of-a-gun, four Clan LRM racks will do about the same amount of damage, cost about the same, fire faster, and take up less space. The only drawback is that they require twice as much heat capacity, but if this is a concern, you should go with multiple Inner Space LRM racks instead of the Thunderbolt.

### I'm So Special!

Another important aspect of good mech design is knowing your goals for a particular mission, and this in turn depends on the type of game and the map in use. One rule that applies in almost all cases, however, is that pulting all of your eggs in one basket is not a good idea. While that üperassault mech may look unstoppable, a well-organized force of small and medium. Size mechs can often



better if you power them down, making them invisible to sensors.



If someone is spotting for them, sensor contacts can be deadly even if they can't see you.

clean its clock if they're fast and well armed. Because of the price/space premium for the largest weapons, loading up a few battleships is far less efficient than devising a varied fleet of cruisers and destroyers, so to speak Also, even the heaviest mechs need backup, and if you've spent all of your money or space on a few mechs, you ll be forced to skimp elsewhere. Variety is even more. important when you're not using the "all tech option, because certain weapons become unavailable.

While creating only specialized mechs isn't a good idea, your mech designs should have a clear purpose, such as scouling. hit-and-run, close combat, or long-range bombardment. All-purpose mechs are rarely good enough at a specific task to replace a focused design. Just don't get carried away.

### Tactically Speaking

The MechCommander series requires a slightly different design focus than firstperson BattleTech games like the MECHWARRIOR series. When you're fighting on a large team in the latter game, you can afford to have a very specialized mech because you can always concentrate on your task, whether it be long-range sniping or hitand-run. In MeckCommandER, however, the unit Al tends to get overly aggressive and chase enemy units if you aren't careful about watching your mechs. This makes long-range mechs very vulnerable to rush tactics, in



Jump jets are the best way to bypass an enemy base defense, but be careful not to jump into a hornet's nest.



Missiles are great for following targets through difficult terrain.

which a fast mech equipped with shortrange weapons gets in close and rips a heavier mech to pieces, If you let your longrange mechs wander away, a good opponent will punish you for it. Besides keeping a

close eye on formations, it's almost always a good idea to protect against this problem by equipping all of your mechs with some short-range weapons

There are numerous multiplayer modes and maps, so giving general advice is difficult But if you're going to be capturing bases,

The Long Tom Cannon (right) and Thunderbolt Missile (left) are impressive but horribly inefficient uses of resources.

having a few jump-jet mechs is essential. The fastest way to capture a base (as you learn in the solo campaign) is to jump a few mechs over the defending walls and capture the turret controls Fighling through a base's defense is time consuming and wasteful Likewise, if you're competing for a lot of resource buildings, having some fast mechs is essential

Getting the first shot at an enemy mech is good, and getting a lot of shots off before your enemy can return fire is even better. The best way to achieve this is through ambush In areas with line-of-sight obstacles Itike the CapBase Classic map), a sneaky lactic is to use some speedy mechs to lure an enemy force close to a ridgeline or other covering terrain where you have hidden a group of powered-down mechs. Powereddown mechs don't show up on sensors, so even if your opponent is being careful and is using sensor-equipped scouts, they won't detect your mechs until they actually see them (or until you power up) If you've laid a good ambush, even the Mech power-up detected!" warning won't be sufficient to prevent you from getting off a [hopefully] devastating salvo or two. Another devious tactic is to hide some missile mechs out of sight and use a scout copter to spot for them. Remember: You don't always have to see what you're shooting at

While super-heavy mech armament is generally not worth the cost, the same is not true of fixed artillery. If it's allowed in your game, and you need to break down a tough objective, fixed artillery is well worth the resource points. Just make sure you have a defensible position where you can place it. because left by itself, it'll be gone before you know it

Not all maps will allow you to fight a combined-arms battle, where long-range mechs team up to support some heavily armored, short-range bruisers. In King of the Hill, it's not only possible, it's required Paradoxically, the player who loses longrange capability first generally loses a game of King of the Hill, so concentrate your fire on support elements and pummel the rest of the force from a distance while you close in for the kill. Make sure you have a couple of heavy mechs for close-in work when you're ready to take the summit.

### DIRTY TRICKS OF THE MONTH

Finally, we're seeing some trick variety. We regetting tricks for more games besides RED ALERT 2 and COUNTER-STRIKE, We haven't gotten that many for the KOHAN call we made earlier, and we're expanding our horizons a bit Now, we'll give the best trick award for KOHAN, FALLOUT TACTICS, or even RED FACTION (assuming it's out by the time you read this). Of course, we'll also reward good tips for other games, but gamers with tips for these get the nod

You It now be playing for a copy of HOSTILE WATERS: ANTAEUS RISING, It's a damn fine game, and once you get into it, it may surprise you. It also has some of the best cut-scenes out there. For now, here's the best tip we've gotten for KOHAN so far-

This tip is meant for KOHANSIMMORTAL Sovietiens ima multiplayer game when you have an atty to whom you menot paid ucularly attached. There is an easy, warm gain some stone der minute back a Well as hurvan ally who shortdoing you much good. If you have a tot or outpost you might find yourself drained on stone unless you have a rampant economic sys-tem. Now what you should do I bouble click on and of the outposite do te the boabova "Sendito ally," and select the per an you want to incur the "d'Stone genally. upon: Now parcilick on the button: Some times the recipient won reven notice the penalty and will just keep playing. Mean while if the outposts are near any mine fields, you'll still retain the bonuses morn them asyou're allied with the person but you reindt paying for it - Myle Women

Propardishing Sites in granish and issue BOLLECTOR SECUTION! WEY TO SECRIF OVE someone who is never caving attention. to his own economy.

your next move will leave you stranded with no moves to follow. That means you can, with enough patience, rack up just as many points as you tike on the early levels where the timer counts down slowly For those who don't have quite that much patience, clicking on the "Bint" button takes off some time. It also takes away some points, but your moves give you more points-per-timebar-inch than the hints take, so you're stut coming out ahead on score. It's easy to have 2,000 at the end of level 1, 6,000 at the end of level 2, and so on. -Michael Linzel

Here are a few BEJEWELED tips to get the highest possible score.

- 1. Luck-it doesn't all have to do with skill. 2. [This is the big one.] In the harder stages, have more than one person looking at the screen for matches. The person behind the "clicker" is screaming stuff while the clicker is doing their own thing. That way, there is always a match being
- 3. It really does have a lot to do with luck in the higher stages, because the only way you can survive is by making combos. Several times, the time bar was screaming at us when my brother managed to find a massive combo that scraped us from the
- 4. If you take cookies out of the oven a few minutes before the time on the box, they will cool to perfection.
- 5. Always work from the bottom up. That is what sets off the chain reactions, which really helps.
- 6. By the time the animation of the sewels. linishes switching, your mouse should be over the next combo.
- 7. If you are stuck, look at only one color at a time. You will be surprised at how many more matches you find if you look only at the reds, greens, etc. -William Jones

### The Other Blizzard Corner

Here are some exclusive recipes for Runewords straight from Blizzard, When you're bandying them about with your new Famine club or whatnot, being the envy of your buddles, just say "I saw it in CGW first."

#### Famine

Created with Axes or Clobs and requires the following Runes. Tal / Ith / Vex / Amn / Thul

- +170%-210% Enhanced Damage
- +9 to Maximum Damage
- +150-200 to Attack Rating
- 13-44 Cold Damage
- 550 Poison Damage over 10 seconds
- 7% Mana stolen per hit
- 7% Life stolen per hit
- -100 to monster defense per hit Drain Life -201
- +5 to Hunger (Druid only)
- \* Drain Life -20 is a curse that causes the wielder of Famine to continually lose life

#### Duress

Created with Body Armor and requires the lottowing Runes: Thut / Ret / Um Stats:

15% Faster Hit Recovery +10%-+25% Enhanced Damage

37-133 Cold Damage

15% Chance of Crushing Blow

33% Chance of Open Wounds

- +150% to 200% Enhanced Defense 20% Faster Stamina Drain\*
- +15% Fire Resistance
- +45% Cold Resistance
- +15% Lightning Resistance
- +15% Poison Resistance
- \* Faster Stamina Drain is a curse that causes the wearer to use stamina laster when running

Created with Claw Weapons and requires the following Runes Eld / Thut / Ort

30% Faster Block Rate

- +40%-+80% Enhanced Damage 10% Bonus to Attack Rating
- +75% Damage to Undead
- +50 Attack Rating vs. Undead 12-32 Fire Damage
- 1-50 Lightning Damage
- 3-14 Cold Damage
- +6 Strength
- +6 Dexterity
- +15% All Resistances



### Readers Get Bejeweled Also

In Time Trial Mode, you don't advance to the next level until you fill the bonus bar up. And you don't lose unless you let the bar run down ino worrying about whether

Send us your tips Bend your tipsytricks, and strategies to egw letters@ziffdavis.com please put cytips in the subject line) We'll publish three submissions each month. Please send genuine tips or strategies instead of cheet codes cut-and-pasted from the internet Dhe winner will get something pulled at random from the Computer Gaming World BozoBin

# GUNGA JUS

THERE'S NOTHING CONVENTIONAL ABOUT IT.







PREPARE TO BE BLOWN AWAY









### INSIDE GAMING



by T. Byrl Baker • tbyrlbaker@msn.com

### **Maximum Overdrive**

### MAX PAYNE mods keep the bullet-time alive



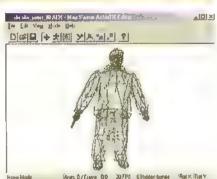
AX PAYNE doesn't talk the talk (the writing is atroclous), but it certainly walks the walk and kept me capti vated throughout all its difficulty levels. It's one of the few recent games that somehow finds its way into my CD-ROM drive even when I should be working on something etse. Judging from all the mods that started appearing only days after the game's release, I imagine things are going to stay that way.

The fine folks at Remedy Entertainment were kind enough to include editing tools with their latest creation, and threw in a menu on the launch screen that lets players choose the mod they want to apply without any fuss. The first mods for the game were simple things like level selectors and cheats that gave players unlimited bullet-time. Now we're getting amazing skins, weapons packs, and levels like the much-desired lobby from The Matrix. By the time you read this, there no doubt will be many total conversions available.

One of my favorite mods right now is Ultimate, a frequently updated combination of mods that tweaks the game in all the right places. It ups the gore levels along with the maximum number of decas, making places look like war zones after Hmm, third-person, builet-time, black leather coat, automatic weapons—what's a logical "first mod"? How about recreating the lobby shootout scene from *The Matrix?* 

firefights, Sound effects are also pumped up You shouldn't use the mod until you've completed the game, as it adds a level selector, a bullet-time meter that regener ales automatically over time, and slower slow motion that makes precision shooting even easier.

Once you finish the game in true cine matic superhero style with a mod like Uitimate, you can test your skills with some thing like Real Payne, which injects a dose of reality into Max Payne's world. It adjusts clip sizes, but the loss of ammo in some weapons is made up for with increased power and pullet velocities. While some weapons get much larger cops, the maximum amount of ammo Maxican tote around is severely limited, Real Payne forces players to rely on marksmanship instead of spraying the greatest amount of lead around a room, and it adds features like the ability to shoot through couches, thin wood walls, and other objects that wouldn't impede a bullet in real life. Of course, the enemies benefit from the increased weapon



damage and they aim much better when this mod is loaded, so you should hoard those painkillers

Be careful when playing around with all these add-ons. Often, saved games are mod specific: You must use the same mod you used when the save was made or the game won't load if the game is crashing to the desktop when you test a mod, try starting a new game and it should work. The best places to download the latest add ons are the Max Payne Center (www.maxpaynecenter.com) and Max Payne Headquarters (www.maxpayneheadquarters.com).

### **Roll Your Own RPG**

Having neither the time nor inclination to



With any luck, this mockup of the COSMIC ENCOUNTER ONLINE game will be live by the time you read this,

learn any programming, it would seem my chances of creating computer garries are nil, but thanks to the latest version of the RPG Toolkit, all of my excuses are gone Designer Christopher Matthews has been improving this freeware product for years now, and his hard work has made it easier than ever to create a role playing game of nearly any size.

The toolkit uses a familiar Windows intelface and comes with several editors for creat using 16 million coors. If you're already familiar with another tile editor, you can create your content there and the RPG (book)t will incorporate it with a few mouse clicks.

Characters are completely customizable, with separate walking and fighting an mations, various sounds for different actions, equipment and accessory slots, and detailed stats. All of the annual on and other editors allow previews that let you see how your final creation will look before you save the changes, with everything displayed directly in the editor. You don't need to faunch the game or a separate test program each time you want to preview your work. The

# "The biggest drawback to Cosmic Encounter is that it's tough to get enough people together to play it properly . . ."

ing tiles, characters, items, monsters, piot triggers, and animated special effects. You can import graphics or create them from scratch using the included tools, and a wealth of resources exist on the Internet where RPC Toolkit users can download content and learn some advanced editing tricks. Games can include music in any file format, including MP3s, just as long as the computer the game is loaded on has a player that can handle the fire.

RPG Toolkit includes enough options to cater to anyone's skill level. The tile editor is a terrific example, as beginners can create small 16x16 tiles using a limited 16- or 256-color palette to keep things simple, while seasoned artists can move up to 32x32 tiles.

toolkit also supports plug-ins, so if you know C++, you can make your own using the downloadable plug in SDK and overcome any limitations the default editor imposes.

For all of the editor's power, there still aren't enough good games out there that use the engine, although there are many available at the RPG Toolkit site that you can use to better understand how the program works. One of the most promising projects is FORGOTTEN LEGENDS (www.8op.com/forgot tenlegends), which is slated to be complete by the time you read this. For resources like tile sets, real-time battle engines, and tutorials, go to The Toolkit Zone at toolkitzone virtualslave net

### Can You Thay Thoth?

Back in our sune issue discussed a free wargame called HOPL TES that's played with cards. That game continues to grow, with new card sets, backgrounds, and even sound packs created all the time. Now Cottardo Zak" Zancani, designer of the game, has released a new version of his other project, the Thoth engine (digitander ior it/zak965/thoth). Thoth lets players conduct card games in real time over the Internet and comes with a wiz ard to aid in the creation of new game files.

If you have neither the time nor the skill to create or convert an existing card game. There are plenty of Thoth files freely available on the Internet Many of these come from Warp Spawn Cames (www.ange fire.com/games2/warpspawn/index.html), which has a complete repository of free game rules and Thoth card sets. Most are two-player contests, but a few like Zuai Spears Winter War, and Space Scouts are designed for so o play and are excellent for learning the interface

#### Cosmic Encounter Online

Cosmic Encounter is one of the most beloved board games of all time, and soon it will have a new home online Richard Garfield claims CE inspired him to create MAGIC: THE GATHERING, and it's easy to see why. Cosmic Encounter uses cards and has a simple rule set, but its gen usiles in the fact that each player can bend the rules in a Unique way, Effectively exercising these special powers to gain an advantage over other players adds a great deal of challenge to the basic gameplay, and with lots of players wielding lots of special powers, the rules get turned on their beads. With hundreds of alien races to choose from, each with a special power, replayability is high and the level of lactical finesse that's possible is unmatched

The biggest drawback to Cosmic Encounter is that it's tough to get enough people together to play it properly, but that should soon change with the introduction of COSMIC ENCOUNTER ONLINE (www.cosmicen countercom). At the time of this writing, the developers, Future Pastimes and Quicksilver had only a basic Java version of the game onime, but the potent al was clear Once. their full-featured Shockwave game appears. i'l likely be coughing up the \$5.50-to-\$8.50 monthly fee for the opportunity to get into a CE game whenever I want. A limited "guest" version also will be available, but it includes only six allen races. The subscription game. will have about three times as many allens to begin with, and the game is open-ended so you can add new aliens regularly. The designers plan to release versions for a vanety of platforms ranging from consoles to handheld PDAs that all can interface with the online game, letting players enjoy CE regardless of their hardware GGT

by Gordon Berg • grognard@concentric.net

### I Hate Flight Sims

Our sim columnist loses it in public!



Then former sim columnist Denny
Atkin first recommended me for this
job, he said that flight sims really
needed a cheer eader I couldn't have
agreed more, so I promptly performed a
few leg kicks and tumbling rolls to prove
my appreciation and enthusiasm. Today,
however, the pom-poms come off (but I'm
keeping the skirt and tight sweater).

it's time to come clean. I think I hate

Okay, maybe hate isn't the right word. Intellectually, I know that I probably don't really hate them per se But emotionally? Yeah, hate pretty much sums up how I feel about 'em right now. Contempt, disgust, and loathing also apply. What's worse, I think that's how I've felt about sims for some time without realizing it That's scary. I feel so dirty inside. What the nell happened to me?

Obviously it wasn't always ake this. After all, flight sims were the reason I bought my first computer. I ultimately didn't become a doctor because of the damn things (thank God), and this is how I show my appreciation? And talk about biting the hand that feeds me. If this is how I really feel about sims, what does that say about my body of work as a reviewer or any future writing that I might do? On second thought, let's not go there and hope Jeff Green isn't reading this.

As despicable as my crimes against simmanity may be, I don't believe I'm entirely at fault... or entirely atone in my feelings. Sims have come a long way and, as I've discussed before, have gotten away from their gaming roots and lost what made them fun to begin with in their pursuit to become more realistic for a while, that was okay. Each new level of realism with each new generation of simulation introduced something innovative and kept us satisfied. But simulations have become victims of their own success, and not solely because of the expensive nature of "feature-creep," a term

aptly coined by producer Andy Hollis of Jane's fame You can only raise the bar so high before you hit the ceiling—not the ceiling of possibilities, but of enthusiasm.

Once I realized this, a few things clicked into place for me. Obviously it's absurd to say that simulations can only go so high or so far. That logic was used by the patent clerk who quith his job back in the 1800s, because he thought nothing of further significance was ever

Flight sim fans still have some games to look forward to, like XTREME AIR RACING, LOMAC, and IL-2 STURMOVIK, but don't look for our flight sim columnist to be playing 'em. Like many gamers these days, he's had it.

going to be invented. What I mean to say is that I've reached a point at which I don't care what comes next. Because sims have experienced feature-creep and not taken a quantum leap forward, because they have become more realistic and less gamelike, because at their core they involve the same gameplay mechanics each and every.





### "... sims have experienced featurecreep and not taken a quantum leap forward, because they have become more realistic and less gamelike ..."

time, I've simply become tired of them all.

There are plenty of analogies to this elsewhere in life. You can eat only so much of the same food before you get sick of it (except pizza). You can stand to read only so many Stephen King books before you need a breather A breather that needs to last for a few years. Say no, or 15, Re ationships need to grow and adapt if they are to carry on, but sometimes a relationship needs a break Simulations and I are still on speaking terms and I have nope for the future, but we've separated for the time being and I've sought legal counse.

The other thing I've realized is the two-way, cyclical nature of gaming genes. Those of you tike me should understand that we're half the reason why genres rise and fall. Genre popularity shifts as generations of fans and consumers come and go, probably for reasons similar to those I've listed above. So it's not just the fault of studios and developers, but of gamers as well I'm sure this has something to do with that whole supply-and-demand thingy I slept through in economics crass.

Everyone lamented over how RPGs were dead (look at them now), how adventure games were dead (tell that to Europe and Dreamcatcher Interactive)—and now over how flight sims are dead, too. Yes, Virginia, flight sims actually are dead, and if this

magazine says one more time that they aren't, I'm flying out to San Francisco and doing some serious assikicking, Um, CGW is going to have to pay my way out there Would it rude of me to ask to be seated in first class?

What does "dead" really mean anyway? Only that there aren't many sims in devel opment compared to what used to be, and current sims don't sell like they used to. So "dead" doesn't necessarily mean dead dead Maybe we should just say the genre is "resting." Those of you keeping the faith have IL-2 STURMOVIK, XTREME AIR RACING and LOMAC to look forward to. As for me, I doubt that flight sims will, ever be as prolific as they once were, but I no longer count because I've apparently "moved on."

If I'm worried about one thing, it's that I might never come back to simulations of any kind, and that would be a shame. I'm staring at my recently purchased copies of DIABLO 2- LORD OF DESTRUCTION and MAX PAYNE. Then there's my ever-growing stack of Infinity Engine games, and I'm hearing the stren call of just one more round of DAY OF DEFEAT—and I think to myself that I could walk away forever and be okay. But just as I re-read Stephen King's The Stand after a 15 year hiatus, maybe I'll come back one day and think sims aren't so bad and maybe I'll even admit to myself that I missed them.



by Bruce Geryk . ceremony@nat66.com

### A Farewell to . . . Ah, Forget It

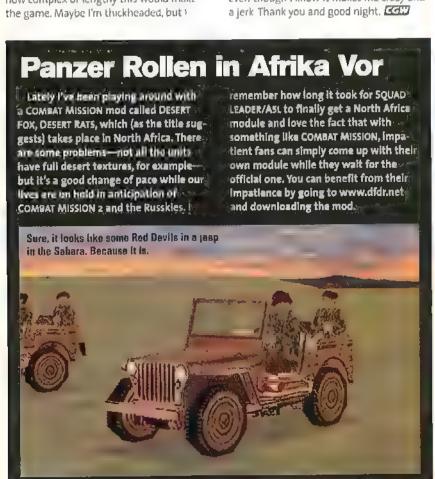
### It's time for the Rout Phase

ime and time again over the past few years, I've heard people ask if wargam ing is dead. While I have no doubts that wargaming is and will remain alive and well for the foreseeable future, this is unfortunately the last "Inside Wargaming"-atleast in its current incarnation. CGW is unveiling a new look next month, and that new look includes a different way of handling columns, I got a chance to publish only a few responses to my question about tactical battles in strategic wargames; but of the many responses I received, there seemed to be a consensus, so I thought I'd. comment on it, even if I can't print more replies Thanks very much to everyone who responded: I read every email even though ! still haven't finished replying to them all

It's clear to me that most wargamers want the ability to fight battles in as detailed a manner as possible, regardless of how complex or lengthy this would make the game. Maybe I'm thickheaded, but i

don't see the point of this. The one thing that has bothered me about computer wargames (and I've expressed this concern in these pages before) is how everything is turning into a giant quantitative war simulator with TelPsyOps and ELINT and any other acronym you can think of

am not a general, I am some guy, I just want to play a game, at the end of which the person who performed the best game analysis without solving a third-order differential equation wins. I don't want to be trained in modern military factics, even though I know this will be important later when the United Nations invades and someone has to figure out how to recapture Cleveland. I want to have fun playing a game, and if the 180th Volkssturm Regiment couldn't really get to Dinant and sometimes the Allies lose the war, I don't feel hurt or disillusioned. I feel this way even though I know it makes me crazy and a jerk Thank you and good night. Gall



### No Trumpets, No Drums



John Tiller has opted not to use historical leader names and unit organizations out of respect for vetorons.

I wondered how long it would be before someone finally developed a tactical Vietnam game. HPS Simulations recently released SQUAD BATTLES, VIETNAM, which is the first in a new series of games designed by John Tiller (of PANZER CAMPAIGNS fame). I asked Tiller why he decided to take the "squad battles" approach to Vietnam. He replied, "Some years ago, I started reading books by Keith Nolan on the Vietnam War, I was struck by how there were so many actions in the war that could be portrayed as a small-unit action. As my reading progressed, it became clear that anything above the squad level would simply be too high a level to portray these actions in sufficient detail. And as the military scale increases, you find a growing sense of futility in the overall scheme of things."

This is an interesting observation that might explain why Vietnam scenarios designed for other game systems (like TOAW) feel so off. As far as I know, Victory Games' VIETNAM is the only serious attempt to model the operational aspects of the war in detail. Everything else I've seen has just seemed tacked onto whatever game system was being used. Now maybe someone will design a game system to model the whole war with all of its unique elements. Or maybe someone will just make another Battle of the Bulge game.



by Stefan "Desslock" Janicki - cgw letters@zjiidavis.com

### **Realistic Fantasy**

### Desslock wants to see more life in his fantasy worlds



ealism has a oad rap in role-playing games. A lot of gamers believe that a more realistic gaming world just means less fun, After all, the more time developers spend making a gaming world seem realistic, the less time they'll have to create involving gameplay. There's some justification for those beliefs, as the developers of games such as TRESPASSER seemed more intent on developing a cool physics engine than ensuring that their game was actually enjoyable. But making games more realistic is a worthwhile goal that has been unfairly maligned due to a handful of bad design decisions. It's the lolo factor of course

Until UtTIMA VIII, all the games in that legendary series required characters to regularly indulge in a hearty repast in order to sustain their strength—they had to eat to survive. Very few gamers ever complained about that requirement, which was a fix ture of early computer RPGs, until lolo and his comrades started consistently bleating for nourishment in ULTIMA Vil. Although your companions in that game were capa ble of dispatching towering dragons with ease, they were unable to sufficiently chow down on the food stocked in their backpacks. The passage of time in the game varled with the speed of your computer, so on a bleeding-edge system your party mem pers' demands for sustenance would be

almost constant. A terriole design decision caused mighty warriors and mages to precisely mimic cranky infants bawling for their next meal and, as a result, you'll never need to feed characters in a role-playing game again. No loss

For some reason, however, developers seemed to interpret the understandable outcry against the ludicrous requirement for you to constantly feed your companions as a demand for less realistic fantasy worlds. That's a ridiculous conclusion, since the game's culinary system wasn't exactly the epitome of realism. Gamers were just objecting to a nonsensical requirement that detracted from gameplay Yet Iolo's unquenchable hunger obscured the merits of a realistic fantasy world for many devel opers, it's time to dismiss the Iolo factor and highlight why computer RPGs should strive to create more realistic environments.

Tabletop RPGs embrace realism. From their inception, tabletop RPGs have offered incredibly realistic, immersive worlds in which players have the freedom to take any reasonable action. Even if their environments are ruled by magic and populated by fantastic creatures, tabletop RPGs try to give piayers the ability to assume an alterlego role in as plausible and immersive a manner as possible. More realistic environments inherently create richer role playing

MORROWIND's interactive environment makes it easier to relate to your role-playing alter ego. Time for some dark alf stew.

opportunities because the additional context makes the role-playing more meaningful

Computer RPGs will never be able to offer environments as open-ended as those in their tabletop counterparts, but computer RPG developers should strive to create realistic worlds if they want to offer more involving role-playing experiences. This wouldn't be as onerous or intimidating a task as you might think, Algaining world can be more realistic and immersive simply by being logically designed and arranged

Bioware's BALDUR'S GATE games do a great job of making environments more interesting simply by populating them with ambient life. Instead of stocking only the areas that you expect characters to reach near the end of the game with powerhouse opponents, throw in creatures that would seem natural at any point. Put a few rats in the sewers or some deer in the forest, and avoid having incongruous groups of enemy types banded together. If there isn't a rea sonable explanation for why an ogre would be hanging out with a pair of ghouls, keep the critters apart.

It may be unrealistic to expect developers to take on the burden of giving nonplayer characters more personality by giving them daily schedules, as ULTIMA V did way back in 1988, but RPG developers should at least try to create less artificial environments by having creatures and characters interact with each other, ULT MA V is Britannia was needably immersive because players could interact with any item or object realistically And similarly, one of the reasons Bethesda's upcoming MORROWIND is so promising Is Is completely interactive world

Developers don't have to be that ambitious, however POOL OF RADIANCE, RUINS OF MYTH DRANNOR will allow some interaction with objects such as furniture, but otherwise uses an isometric graphical perspective very similar to the BALDLR'S GATE games. Aside from introducing additional tactical choices, environments with even limited interactivity are more interesting than flat, painted settings.

An unrealistic gaming world discourages role-playing. For RPGs, realism is good Realism works. 2577

### Requiem for a Dream

One company falls. One journalist weeps.

ame historians and collectors should do themselves a favor and seek out a copy of the December 1997 issue of Computer Gaming World. If you can't find one in your closet or on eBay, send me an email and I'll sell you one for, oh, let's say \$50 Better yet, just go ahead and send me the \$50 now. I'm sure I'll get back to you eventually.

The December 1997 CGW remains a landmark issue for at least two reasons. First, if you can actually lift the thing, you'll notice that it weighs in at a hefty 498 pages, making it not only the biggest issue we ever published, but also a formidable instrument to use for beating your little brother. Looking at this humongous issue now, it's hard to believe that we ever published magazines this big, but that's the difference between a healthy economy and the wheezing Abe Vigoda-like one we've got right now.

Anyway, once you get a hold of this massive tome, you should flip immediately to page 58, where a small, sad piece of gaming history unfolds before your very eyes. There, in living color, a mute relic of a bygone era, is the very first print advertisement for a brand new game company that promised to take the world by storm

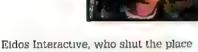
"We're Ion Storm," they declare. "A bunch of misfit, zealot freaks who tried to rest on our past successes, but just didn't find it comfortable." It goes on like this for two pages. Sassy text descriptions of each of the six main freaks, with five photos apiece. Todd Porter, we learn, is 'a mandolinplaying, natty GO type who thinks games should be as stylish as he is." John Romero, Tom Hall, Mike Wilson, Jerry O'Flaherty, and Bob Wright all get their turn, too-paraded before us like rock stars, like saviors, like idealistic visionaries who were gonna turn gaming on its head

"We had all hved on the edge," they said. "But we were ready to jump off."

Four years later, I guess you could say they did just that.

I suppose it might seem like overkill

to pick on Ion Storm now, what with the doors closed, the windows shuttered, and the company corpse rotting in the warm Dallas sun. And really, I had finished with these guys a while ago. But I find myself writing about them one last time for a wholly unexpected reason. I just played their final game, ANACHRONOX, released almost simultaneously with the company's closure, and I loved it. Here,



down. And who could blame them?
But what I discovered this month,
and what I'm happy to admit, is that it
turns out they really had it in them
after all ANACHRONOX, Tom Hall's
homage to classic console RPGs like
CHRONO TRIGGER, is, in my mind, one
of the best games of the year, and is

easily the best console-style RPG ever

made for the PC. It's a generous,

### "Emperors must be overthrown. The status quo must be spanked." —Ion Storm, 1997

finally, after four years of crowing, after four years of missed deadlines and underperformance and endless public buffoonery, was a game that lived up to the hype—only now the company is dead. It's the final joke in fon Storm's four-year comedy of errors—only now it doesn't seem so funny.

Ah, Ion Storm. If only they'd really listened to themselves, "Design is law," they proclaimed in that December 1997 ad, Design was so not law at Ion Storm that it's just sad. If design had been law, then their first two games—the woefully mediocre DOMINION: STORM OVER GIFT 3 and the spectacular train wreck known as DAIKATANA-would have been found quilty and sentenced to death. If design had been law, neither of those games would have made it past product testing without major, serious revisions, Instead, for four long years, hype was law. Ego was law. Glitz and parties and a fancy, futuristic office in a way-too-posh Dallas skyscraper were law.

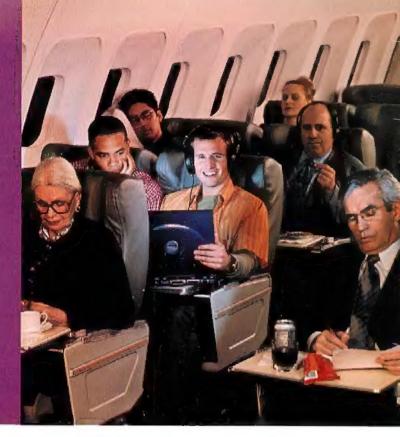
By the time their third game, ANACHRONOX, was finally, belatedly released this summer, pretty much everyone had already given up on Ion Storm, including their own publisher, entertaining smorgasbord of a game, bursting with creativity, talent, and humor, with some of the funniest dialogue and cut-scenes in any game in years. Design, at long last, was law—it just showed up a little too late.

In a way, Ion Storm serves as the perfect poster child for a happier, more innocent time in the gaming biz. A time when wallets were open, and possibilities were limitless. Ion Storm would never happen now. Publishers and investors are too cheap, too scared, and too conservative now to give a horde of money to a group of "misfit, zealous freaks." Everyone's just looking nervously for the next big hit—and the gaming world is more boring for it.

So I guess this is so long, Ion Storm. We haven't always gotten along, but I'm gonna miss you Thanks for the easy jokes. Thanks for the horrible ads and cranky emails And thanks, finally—and sincerely—for ANACHRONOX Your company's dead and your game is orphaned, but you finally turned me into a fan. Bastards! [CC]

In his dreams, Jeff will be killing robot frogs forever. Ride his boomstick at jeff\_green@zilfdavis.com.

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- 56K Capable® PCI Tetephony Modern for Windows®
- MS\* Works Suite 2001
- MS\* Windows\* Me
- Keyboard and Mouse
- 6 Months DellNet\* by MSN\* Internet Access\*3
- 1-Yr At-Home Service, 1-Yr Limited Warranty, 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support

9 or as low as \$39 per mo. 45 mos." No payments for 90 days." E-VALUE Code: 00449-500912c

### DELL" DIMENSION 2100

- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 1.1GHz
- 128MB Shared SDRAM® at 100MHz
- 20GB\* Ultra ATA/100 Hard Drive (7200 RPM)
- 17" (16.0" vis, 28dp) E770 Monitor
- Integrated Intel® 3D® AGP Graphics
- 48X Max CD-ROM Drive
- SB Livel 1024 Digital Sound Card
- Harman Kardon® HK-195 Speakers
- 56K Capable PCI Telephony Modern for Windows
- MS\* Works Suite 2001
- MS\* Windows\* Me
- Keyboard and Mouse
- 6 Months DellNet" by MSN\* Internet Access\*
- 1-Yr At-Home Service, 1-Yr Limited Warranty, 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support

\$899 or as low as \$27 per mo, 45 mps." No payments for 90 days," E-VALUE Code: 00449-500908

### **DELL™ NOTEBOOKS:**

### DELL™ INSPIRON™ 2500

Great System, Great Price

- Intel® Celeron® Processor at 800MHz
- 12.1" SVGA TFT Display
- 128MB Shared PC100 SDRAM
- 10GB Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Fixed 24X Max CD-ROM
- Intel® Integrated 3D AGP Video with up to 8MB shared system memory
- Sound8laster® compatible
- 26.5WHr Li-lon Battery
- Internal 58K Capable® FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2001
- MS\* Windows\* Ma
- 1-Yr Mail-in Service, 1-Yr Limited Warranty, 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support
- 6 Months DellNet" by MSN\* Internet Access\*

\$1049 or as few as \$32 per mo. 48 moz. 9

No payments for 90 days." E-VALUE Code: 00449-800910m

■ Upgrade to 20GB' Ultra ATA Hard Drive, add \$149

### DELL™ INSPIRON™ 4000

#### Thin & Light

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 800MHz featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 14.1" XGA TFT Display
- 192M8 100MHz Shared SDRAM
- 10GB\* Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular 8X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 8M8 AGP 2X ATI Rage Mobility 128" 3D Video
- 3D Positional Sound with Wavetable
- 26.5WHr Li-lon Battery w/ExpressCharge\*\* Technology
- Internal 56K Capable\* FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2001
- MS\* Windows\* Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty, 1-Yr Mail-in Service 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support
- 6 Months DellNet" by MSN\* Internet Access

**529** or as form as \$46 per mo. 45 mos."

No payments for 90 days." E-VALUE Code: 00449-800915m

- Upgrade to 20GB\* Ultra ATA Hard Drive,
- Upgrade to 8X CD-RW Drive, add \$120

### DELL" INSPIRON" 4000

#### Thin & Light

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 900MHz featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 14.1" Super XGA+ TFT Display
- 192MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 20GB¹ Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular 8X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 8MB AGP 2X ATI Rage Mobility 128" 3D Video
- 3D Positional Sound with Wavetable
- 26.5 WHr Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge" Technology
- Internal 56K Capable\* FaxModem
- MS\* Works Suite 2001
- MS\* Windows\* Me
- 1-Yr Mail-in Service, 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support
- 6 Months DeliNet" by MSN\* Internet Access\*

\$18**29** or as flow as \$55 per mo. 45 mos.\* No payments for 90 days." E-VALUE Code: 00449 800918m

 Upgrade to DVD/CD-RW Combination Drive, add \$220

Add a Notebook Surge Protector, add \$29

### DELL" INSPIRON 8100

### Multimedia Mobile Desktop

- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.13GHz-M featuring Intel® SpeedStep® Technology
- 15" Super XGA+ TFT Display
- 256MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 20G8 Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Fixed Internal 8X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 32MB DDR 4X AGP NVIDIA\* GeForce2 Go\* 3D Video
- 3D Positional Sound with Wavelable
- 59WHr Li-Ion Battery w/ExpressCharge\* Technology
- Internal 56K Capable\* FaxModem
- MS\* Works Suite 2001
- MS\* Windows\* Me
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty, 1-Yr Mail-in Service 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support
- 6 Months DellNat\* by MSN\* Internet Access\*

9 or as low as \$75 per mo. 46 mos." No payments for 90 days." E-VALUE Code: 00449-800924m

■ Upgrade to 2nd Bay 8X CD-RW Drive, add \$179

■ Upgrade to Notebook Protection Backpack, add \$79

### DELL™ SOLUTIONS:

### SOFTWARE & ACCESSORIES

#### Printers:

- Epson® Stylus 777 Color Printer, add \$79
- HP\* DeskJet\* 960Cse, add \$149 after \$50 HP\* Mail-in Rebate<sup>31</sup> (Reg. \$199)

■ HP\* ScanJet\* 4400Cse, add \$99 after \$50 HP\* Mail-in Rebate\* (Reg. \$149)

### Power Protection:

■ APC® Pro8T2 SurgeArrest, add \$39

- Fxtreme Game Pack (Dimension)" only), add \$79
- Family Game Pack, add \$79

### **SERVICE & SUPPORT**

How about some peace of mind to accompany your new Dell'\* system?

Dimension" Desktop Service Upgrades:

■ Upgrade Dimension\* Desktops 1-Yr Ltd Warranty, 1-Yr At-Home Service' to 3-Yr Ltd Warranty', 3-Yr At-Home Service', add \$119

Inspiron" Notebook Service Upgrades:

- Upgrade Inspiron<sup>®</sup> Notebooks with 1-Yr Ltd
   Warranty<sup>i</sup> and 1-Yr Mail-in Service to:
   3-Yr Ltd Warranty<sup>i</sup>, 3-Yr Mail-in Service and 3-Yr
- 24x7 Phone Support, add \$119

   3-Yr Ltd Warranty, 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-Site Service' and Lifetime 24x7 Phone Support, add \$219



"Telephone access (call your phone co. for details) and other surcharges for access may apply. Must register within 30 days of invoice and accent DellNet/MSN Torms of Service. You agree to be billed mostly lines after the initial service period. You may cancel service at any time. Offer valid for new customers only in U.S. households and must be over 18 years old with major credit card. Limited time offer. "Monthly payment based on 13.99% APR FOR QUALIFIED CUSTOMERS, OFFER VARIES BY CREDITWORTHINESS CUSTOMER AS DETERMINED BY LENDER. Under 90 Days Same-As-Cash feature, interest accrues during first 90 days il balance not paid within 90 days. Customers not eligible for 90 Days Same-As-Cash leature may be offered standard 48-month lianneing with APRs ranging from 16.99% to 26.99%. Example: \$1.650 purchase price, at 19.99%, 48 monthly payments at \$51. Taxes and slupping charges extra and vary. From American Investment Bank, N.A. or CIT OnLine Bank to U.S. residents with approved credit.

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D&LL4me,com

2.0GHz.
my friends
are envious.
my enemies
are scared.





### DELL" DIMENSION" 8100

#### **Cutting-Edge Technology**

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.0GHz
- 128MB PC800 RDRAM
- 40GB\* Ultra ATA/100 Hard Drive (7200 RPM)
- 17" (16.0" vis, .28dp) E770 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA® GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV-Out
- 48X Max CD-ROM Drive
- SoundBlaster 64V PCI LC Sound Card
- harman/kardon\* HK-395 Speakers
- 56K Capable\* PCI Telephony Modern for Windows\*
- Integrated 3Com® 10/100 Ethernat Controller
- MS\* Works\* Suite 2001 MS\* Windows\* Me
- Keyboard and Mouse
- 6 Months of DellNet \*\* by MSN\* Internet Access\*\*
- 1-Yr At-Home Service' 1-Yr Limited Warranty\*
- 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support

### \$1699 @ E-VALUE CODE

#### ASK US ABOUT NO PAYMENTS FOR 90 DAYS.

- 19" (18.0" vis, .26dp) M991 Monitor, add \$70
   256 PC800 RDRAM, add \$110
- 3-Yr At-Home Service, 3-Yr Limited Warranty, Lifetime 24x7 Phone Support, add \$119

The Dell™ Dimension™ 8100 with a 2.0GHz processor. Feel the power.

Simply stated, the Intel® Pentium® 4 processor delivers mind-boggling processing speed when you need it the most. Want to know more? (There are always a few who do.) The 8100 features dual-channel RDRAM with memory up to 1GB, a 400MHz system bus and a built-in ATA/100 hard drive interface. Yes, it's a bit lonely having a PC like this. But you'll get used to it.



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